THE POCKET UNIVERSITY

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BIOGRAPHY

VOLUME III

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CONTENTS

PAGE

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1
Washington Irving

RICHARD THE FIRST, CALLED THE LION-HEART . . 24
Charles Dickens

PETER THE GREAT 40
Voltaire

CATO 53
Plutarch

THOMAS HOOD 101
William Makepeace Thackeray

LORD MACAULAY 113
Charles Cavendish Fulke Greville

SOME OF DR. JOHNSON'S FRIENDS—JAMES BOSWELL, SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, BENNET LANGTON AND TOPHAM BEAUCLERK, OLIVER GOLDSMITH, THE LAST DINNER 130
James Boswell

LAURENCE STERNE 152
Walter Bagehot

LORD BYRON 189
Lord Macaulay

PAGE

THE STRANGE CHILDHOOD OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË . 202
Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell

JOAN OF ARC 218
Jules Michelet

DANTE 233
Thomas Carlyle

INTRODUCTION

It is not surprising that there are so few good biographies; they require hard work and inspiration, two qualities not often found in one person. Autobiography is much easier, for the author has already the most essential part of his equipment—an intimate and sympathetic personal association with himself over a period of years, which more often than not, throws his perspective out of focus, but nevertheless gives authenticity to what he is doing.

The most popular biographies we have, if centuries are considered, are those of Plutarch, but the model biography is Boswell's "Johnson." Boswell worshipped Johnson and thought nothing he said too trifling to record in his notes; yet when he came to develop them, he selected so carefully and comprehensively that we have a complete portrait, immensely readable, of an interesting, lovable, opinionated, preposterous old fellow who summed up the whole of his part of the Eighteenth century, in so far as it is possible for one man to sum up an age.

The fact that this is the best does not mean

that others are not good; anyone strongly impressed by another and able to record his impressions in words can do a good biographical bit. Irving at Scott's home, unable to sleep for excitement at actually being a guest in the great Sir Walter's home, Greville suddenly overwhelmed by the discovery that the man he had thought so stupid at dinner was none other than the brilliant Macaulay, Thackeray reverencing the jester, Hood—all these come from vivid personal contacts and are very telling. The imaginative interpretations, if based on scholarship and knowledge, are not far behind, as, for example, Joan of Arc as seen by Michelet or Dante as seen by Carlyle.

Milton said that "a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." In the truest biography there is always the life blood of two master spirits, that of the author along with that of his subject. Dickens' character might almost be reconstructed from his story here of Richard, the First, called the Lion Heart. So, too in all other cases where the author is worthy of his subject and his work is well done.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

LATE in the evening of the 29th of August, 1817, I arrived at the ancient little border-town of Selkirk, where I put up for the night. I had come down from Edinburgh, partly to visit Melrose Abbey and its vicinity, but chiefly to get a sight of the "mighty minstrel of the north." I had a letter of introduction to him from Thomas Campbell the poet, and had reason to think, from the interest he had taken in some of my earlier scribblings, that a visit from me would not be deemed an intrusion.

On the following morning, after an early breakfast, I set off in a post-chaise for the Abbey. On the way thither I stopped at the gate of Abbotsford, and sent the postilion to the house with the letter of introduction and my card, on which I had written that I was on my way to the ruins of Melrose Abbey, and wished to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Scott (he had not yet been made a Baronet) to receive a visit from me in the course of the morning.

While the postilion was on his errand, I had time to survey the mansion. It stood some short

distance below the road, on the side of a hill sweeping down to the Tweed; and was as yet but a snug gentleman's cottage, with something rural and picturesque in its appearance. The whole front was overrun with evergreens, and immediately above the portal was a great pair of elk-horns, branching out from beneath the foliage, and giving the cottage the look of a hunting-lodge. The huge baronial pile, to which this modest mansion in a manner gave birth, was just emerging into existence: part of the walls surrounded by scaffolding, already had risen to the height of the cottage, and the court-yard in front was encumbered by masses of hewn stone.

The noise of the chaise had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and, leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. His alarum brought out the whole garrison of dogs,—

> "Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
> And curs of low degree";

all open-mouthed and vociferous.—I should correct my quotation; not a cur was to be seen on the premises: Scott was too true a sportsman, and had too high a veneration for pure blood, to tolerate a mongrel.

In a little while the "lord of the castle" himself made his appearance. I knew him at once by the descriptions I had read and heard, and the likenesses that had been published of him. He was tall, and of a large and powerful frame. His dress was simple, and almost rustic: an old green shooting-coat, with a dog-whistle at the button-hole, brown linen pantaloons, stout shoes that tied at the ankles, and a white hat that had evidently seen service. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking staff, but moving rapidly and with vigour. By his side jogged along a large iron-grey staghound of most grave demeanour, who took no part in the clamour of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception.

Before Scott had reached the gate he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand: "Come, drive down, drive down to the house," said he, "ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey."

I would have excused myself, on the plea of having already made my breakfast. "Hout, man," cried he, "a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast."

I was accordingly whirled to the portal of the cottage, and in a few moments found myself seated at the breakfast-table. There was no one present but the family: which consisted of Mrs. Scott; her eldest daughter Sophia, then a fine girl about seventeen; Miss Ann Scott, two or three years younger; Walter, a well-grown stripling; and Charles, a lively boy, eleven or twelve years of age. I soon felt myself quite at home, and my heart in a glow with the cordial welcome I experienced. I had thought to make a mere morning visit, but found I was not to be let off so lightly. "You must not think our neighbourhood is to be read in a morning, like a newspaper," said Scott. "It takes several days of study for an observant traveller that has a relish for auld-world trumpery. After breakfast you shall make your visit to Melrose Abbey; I shall not be able to accompany you, as I have some household affairs to attend to, but I will put you in charge of my son Charles, who is very learned in all things touching the old ruin and the neighbourhood it stands in, and he and my friend Johnny Bower will tell you the whole truth about it, with a good deal more that you are not called upon to believe—unless you be a true and nothing-doubting antiquary. When you come back, I'll take you out on a ramble about the neighbourhood. To-morrow we will take a look at the Yarrow, and the next day we will drive

over to Dryburgh Abbey, which is a fine old ruin well worth seeing";—in a word, before Scott had got through with his plan, I found myself committed for a visit of several days, and it seemed as if a little realm of romance was suddenly opened before me.

After my return from Melrose Abbey, Scott proposed a ramble to show me something of the surrounding country. As we sallied forth, every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old stag hound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal, and a great favourite of Scott's; and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived to the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft silken hair, long pendent ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound, who came from the kitchen wagging his tail, and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade.

In our walks, Scott would frequently pause in conversation to notice his dogs and speak to them, as if rational companions; and indeed there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to

preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance ahead of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a frolic. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust; then giving a glance at us, as much as to say, "You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense," would resume his gravity and jog on as before.

Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. "I make no doubt," said he, "when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say, 'Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters; what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?' "

His domestic animals were his friends; everything about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance: the face of the humblest dependant brightened at his approach, as if he anticipated a cordial and cheering word. I had occasion to observe this particularly in a visit which we paid to a quarry, whence several men were cutting stone for the new edifice; who all

paused from their labour to have a pleasant "crack wi' the laird." One of them was a burgess of Selkirk with whom Scott had some joke about the old song,—

"Up with the Souters o' Selkirk,
And down with the Earl of Home."

Another was precentor at the Kirk, and, beside leading the psalmody on Sunday, taught the lads and lasses of the neighbourhood dancing on week-days, in the wintertime, when out-of-door labour was scarce.

Among the rest was a tall, straight old fellow, with a healthful complexion and silver hair, and a small round-crowned white hat. He had been about to shoulder a hod, but paused, and stood looking at Scott, with a slight sparkling of his blue eye, as if waiting his turn; for the old fellow knew himself to be a favourite.

Scott accosted him in an affable tone, and asked him for a pinch of snuff. The old man drew forth a horn snuff-box. "Hoot, man," said Scott, "not that old mull: where's the bonnie French one that I brought you from Paris?"—"Troth, your honour," replied the old fellow, "sic a mull as that is nae for week-days."

On leaving the quarry, Scott informed me that when absent at Paris, he had purchased several trifling articles as presents for his dependants,

and among others the gay snuff-box in question, which was so carefully reserved for Sundays by the veteran. "It was not so much the value of the gifts," said he, "that pleased them, as the idea that the laird should think of them when so far away."

The old man in question, I found, was a great favourite with Scott. If I recollect right, he had been a soldier in early life, and his straight, erect person, his ruddy yet rugged countenance, his grey hair, and an arch gleam in his blue eye, reminded me of the description of Edie Ochiltree. I find that the old fellow has since been introduced by Wilkie, in his picture of the Scott family.

We rambled on among scenes which had been familiar in Scottish song, and rendered classic by the pastoral muse, long before Scott had thrown the rich mantle of his poetry over them. What a thrill of pleasure did I feel when first I saw the broom-covered tops of the Cowden Knowes, peeping above the grey hills of the Tweed; and what touching associations were called up by the sight of Ettrick Vale, Galla Water, and the Braes of Yarrow! Every turn brought to mind some household air—some almost forgotten song of the nursery, by which I had been lulled to sleep in my childhood; and

with them the looks and voices of those who had sung them; and who were now no more. It is these melodies, chanted in our ears in the days of infancy, and connected with the memory of those we have loved, and who have passed away, that clothe Scottish landscape with such tender associations. The Scottish songs, in general, have something intrinsically melancholy in them; owing, in probability, to the pastoral and lonely life of those who composed them; who were often mere shepherds, tending their flocks in the solitary glens, or folding them among the naked hills. Many of these rustic bards have passed away, without leaving a name behind them; nothing remains of them but their sweet and touching songs, which live, like echoes, about the places they once inhabited. Most of these simple effusions of pastoral poets are linked with some favourite haunt of the poet; and in his way, not a mountain or valley, a town or tower, green shaw or running stream, in Scotland, but has some popular air connected with it, that makes its very name a key-note to a whole train of delicious fancies and feelings.

Let me step forward in time, and mention how sensible I was to the power of these simple airs, in a visit which I made to Ayr, the birth-place of Robert Burns. I passed a whole morning about "the banks and braes of bonnie Doon," with his tender little love-verses running in my head. I

found a poor Scotch carpenter at work among the ruins of Kirk Alloway, which was to be converted into a school-house. Finding the purpose of my visit, he left his work, sat down with me on a grassy grave, close by where Burns' father was buried, and talked of the poet, whom he had known personally. He said his songs were familiar to the poorest and most illiterate of the country folk, *"and it seemed to him as if the country had grown more beautiful since Burns had written his bonnie little songs about it."*

Scott went on to expatiate on the popular songs of Scotland. "They are a part of our national inheritance," said he, "and something that we may truly call our own. They have no foreign taint; they have the pure breath of the heather and the mountain breeze. All the genuine legitimate races that have descended from the ancient Britons, such as the Scotch, the Welsh, and the Irish, have national airs. The English have none, because they are not natives of the soil, or, at least, are mongrels. Their music is all made up of foreign scraps, like a harlequin jacket, or a piece of mosaic. Even in Scotland we have comparatively few national songs in the eastern part, where we have had most influx of strangers. A real old Scottish song is a cairn gorm—a gem of our own mountains; or, rather, it is a precious relic of old times, that bears the national character stamped upon it,—like a cameo, that shows

what the national visage was in former days, before the breed was crossed."

While Scott was thus discoursing, we were passing up a narrow glen, with the dogs beating about, to right and left, when suddenly a black cock burst upon the wing.

"Aha!" cried Scott, "there will be a good shot for master Walter; we must send him this way with his gun, when we go home. Walter's the family sportsman now, and keeps us in game. I have pretty nigh resigned my gun to him; for I find I cannot trudge about as briskly as formerly."

Our ramble took us on the hills commanding an extensive prospect. "Now," said Scott, "I have brought you, like the pilgrim in the *Pilgrim's Progress,* to the top of the Delectable Mountains, that I may show you all the goodly regions hereabouts. Yonder is Lammermuir, and Smalholme; and there you have Gallashiels, and Torwoodlie, and Gallawater; and in that direction you see Teviotdale, and the Braes of Yarrow; and Ettrick stream, winding along, like a silver thread, to throw itself into the Tweed."

He went on thus to call over names celebrated in Scottish song, and most of which had recently received a romantic interest from his own pen. In fact, I saw a great part of the border country spread out before me, and could trace the scenes of those poems and romances which had, in a manner, bewitched the world. I gazed about me

for a time with mute surprise, I may almost say with disappointment. I beheld a mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach; monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree or thicket on its banks; and yet, such had been the magic web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole, that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I beheld in England.

I could not help giving utterance to my thoughts. Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave; he had no idea of having his muse complimented at the expense of his native hills. "It may be partiality," said he, at length, "but to my eye these grey hills and all this wild border country have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden-land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills; and if I did not see the heather at least once a year, *I think I should die!*"

The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied with a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that

showed his heart was in his speech. He vindicated the Tweed, too, as a beautiful stream in itself, and observed that he did not dislike it for being bare of trees, probably from having been much of an angler in his time, and an angler does not like to have a stream overhung by trees, which embarrass him in the exercise of his rod and line.

I took occasion to plead, in like manner, the associations of early life, for my disappointment in respect to the surrounding scenery. I had been so accustomed to hills crowned with forests, and streams breaking their way through a wilderness of trees, that all my ideas of romantic landscape were apt to be well wooded.

"Aye, and that's the great charm of your country," cried Scott. "You love the forest as I do the heather,—but I would not have you think I do not feel the glory of a great woodland prospect. There is nothing I should like more than to be in the midst of one of your grand, wild, original forests: with the idea of hundreds of miles of untrodden forest around me. I once saw, at Leith, an immense stick of timber, just landed from America. It must have been an enormous tree when it stood on its native soil, at its full height, and with all its branches. I gazed at it with admiration; it seemed like one of the gigantic obelisks which are now and then brought from Egypt, to shame the pigmy monuments of Europe;

and, in fact, these vast aboriginal trees, that have sheltered the Indians before the intrusion. of the white men, are the monuments and antiquities of your country."

We had not walked much further before we saw the two Miss Scotts advancing along the hill-side to meet us. The morning studies being over, they had set off to take a ramble on the hills, and gather heather-blossoms with which to decorate their hair for dinner. As they came bounding lightly like young fawns, and their dresses fluttering in the pure summer breeze, I was reminded of Scott's own description of his children in his introduction to one of the cantos of "Marmion,"—

"My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain-child,
Their summer gambols tell and mourn,
And anxious ask will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

"Yes, prattlers, yes, the daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day."

As they approached, the dogs all sprang forward and gambolled around them. They played with them for a time, and then joined us with countenances full of health and glee. Sophia, the eldest, was the most lively and joyous, having much of her father's varied spirit in conversation, and seeming to catch excitement from his words and looks. Ann was of quieter mood, rather silent, owing, in some measure, no doubt, to her being some years younger.

At dinner, Scott had laid by his half rustic dress, and appeared clad in black. The girls, too, in completing their toilet, had twisted in their hair the sprigs of purple heather which they had gathered on the hill-side, and looked all fresh and blooming from their breezy walk.

There was no guest at dinner but myself. Around the table were two or three dogs in attendance. Maida, the old staghound, took his seat at Scott's elbow, looking up wistfully in his master's eye, while Finette, the pet spaniel, placed herself near Mrs. Scott, by whom, I soon perceived, she was completely spoiled.

The conversation happening to turn on the merits of his dogs, Scott spoke with great feeling and affection of his favourite, Camp, who is depicted by his side in the earlier engravings of him. He talked of him as of a real friend whom he

had lost; and Sophia Scott, looking up archly in his face, observed that papa shed a few tears when poor Camp died. I may here mention another testimonial of Scott's fondness for his dogs, and his humorous mode of showing it, which I subsequently met with. Rambling with him one morning about the grounds adjacent to the house, I observed a small antique monument, on which was inscribed, in Gothic characters,—

"Cy git le preux Percy."
(Here lies the brave Percy.)

I paused, supposing it to be the tomb of some stark warrior of the olden time, but Scott drew me on. "Pooh!" cried he, "it's nothing but one of the monuments of my nonsense, of which you'll find enough hereabouts." I learnt afterwards that it was the grave of a favourite greyhound.

Among the other important and privileged members of the household who figured in attendance at the dinner, was a large grey cat, who, I observed, was regaled from time to time with titbits from the table. This sage grimalkin was a favourite of both master and mistress, and slept at night in their room; and Scott laughingly observed, that one of the least wise parts of their establishment was, that the window was left open at night for puss to go in and out. The cat assumed a kind of ascendency among the

quadrupeds—sitting in state in Scott's arm-chair, and occasionally stationing himself on a chair beside the door, as if to review his subjects as they passed, giving each dog a cuff beside the ears as he went by. This clapper-clawing was always taken in good part; it appeared to be, in fact, a mere act of sovereignty on the part of grimalkin, to remind the others of their vassalage; which they acknowledged by the most perfect acquiescence. A general harmony prevailed between sovereign and subjects, and they would all sleep together in the sunshine.

Scott was full of anecdote and conversation during dinner. He made some admirable remarks upon the Scottish character, and spoke strongly in praise of the quiet, orderly, honest conduct of his neighbours, which one would hardly expect, said he, from the descendants of moss-troopers and borderers, in a neighbourhood famed in old times for brawl and feud, and violence of all kinds. He said he had, in his official capacity of sheriff, administered the laws for a number of years, during which there had been very few trials. The old feuds and local interests, and rivalries, and animosities of the Scotch, however, still slept, he said, in their ashes, and might easily be roused. Their hereditary feeling for names was still great. It was not always safe to have even the game of foot-ball between villages, the old clannish spirit was too apt to break out.

The Scotch, he said, were more revengeful than the English; they carried their resentments longer, and would sometimes lay them by for years, but would be sure to gratify them in the end.

The ancient jealousy between the Highlanders and the Lowlanders still continued to a certain degree, the former looking upon the latter as an inferior race, less brave and hardy, but at the same time suspecting them of a disposition to take airs upon themselves under the idea of superior refinement. This made them techy and ticklish company for a stranger on his first coming among them; ruffling up and putting themselves upon their mettle on the slightest occasion, so that he had in a manner to quarrel and fight his way into their good graces.

He instanced a case in point in a brother of Mungo Park, who went to take up his residence in a wild neighbourhood of the Highlands. He soon found himself considered as an intruder, and that there was a disposition among these cocks of the hills to fix a quarrel on him, trusting that, being a Lowlander, he would show the white feather.

For a time he bore their flings and taunts with great coolness, until one, presuming on his forbearance, drew forth a dirk, and holding it before him, asked him if he had ever seen a weapon like that in his part of the country. Park, who was a

Hercules in frame, seized the dirk, and, with one blow, drove it through an oaken table. "Yes," replied he, "and tell your friends that a man from the Lowlands drove it where the devil himself cannot draw it out again." All persons were delighted with the feat, and the words that accompanied it. They drank with Park to a better acquaintance, and were stanch friends ever afterwards.

After dinner we adjourned to the drawing-room, which served also for study and library. Against the wall on one side was a long writing-table, with drawers; surmounted by a small cabinet of polished wood, with folding doors richly studded with brass ornaments, within which Scott kept his most valuable papers. Above the cabinet, in a kind of niche, was a complete corselet of glittering steel, with a closed helmet, and flanked by gauntlets and battle-axes. Around were hung trophies and relics of various kinds: a cimeter of Tippoo Saib; a Highland broadsword from Floddenfield; a pair of Rippon spurs from Bannockburn, and above all, a gun which had belonged to Rob Roy, and bore his initials, R. M. G.,—an object of peculiar interest to me at the time, as it was understood Scott was actually engaged in printing a novel founded on the story of that famous outlaw.

On each side of the cabinet were bookcases,

well stored with works of romantic fiction in various languages, many of them rare and antiquated. This, however, was merely his cottage library, the principal part of his books being at Edinburgh.

The evening passed away delightfully in this quaint-looking apartment, half study, half drawing-room. Scott read several passages from the old romance of Arthur, with a fine deep sonorous voice, and a gravity of tone that seemed to suit the antiquated, black-letter volume. It was a rich treat to hear such a work, read by such a person, and in such a place; and his appearance as he sat reading, in a large armed chair, with his favourite hound Maida at his feet, and surrounded by books and relics, and border trophies, would have formed an admirable and most characteristic picture.

While Scott was reading, the sage grimalkin already mentioned had taken his seat in a chair beside the fire, and remained with fixed eye and grave demeanour, as if listening to the reader. I observed to Scott that his cat seemed to have a black-letter taste in literature.

"Ah," said he, "these cats are a very mysterious kind of folk. There is always more passing in their minds than we are aware of. It comes from their being so familiar with witches and warlocks." He went on to tell a little story about a gude man who was returning to his cottage one

night, when, in a lonely out-of-the-way place, he met with a funeral procession of cats all in mourning, bearing one of their race to the grave in a coffin covered with a black velvet pall. The worthy man, astonished and half frightened at so strange a pageant, hastened home and told what he had seen to his wife and children. Scarce had he finished, when a great black cat that sat beside the fire raised himself up, exclaimed, "Then I am king of the cats!" and vanished up the chimney. The funeral seen by the gude man was one of the cat dynasty.

"Our grimalkin here," added Scott, "sometimes reminds me of the story, by the airs of sovereignty which he assumes; and I am apt to treat him with respect from the idea that he may be a great prince incog., and may some time or other come to the throne."

In this way Scott would make the habits and peculiarities of even the dumb animals about him subjects for humorous remark and whimsical story.

Our evening was enlivened also by an occasional song from Sophia Scott, at the request of her father. She never wanted to be asked twice, but complied frankly and cheerfully. Her songs were all Scotch, sung without any accompaniment, in a simple manner, but with great spirit and expression, and in their native dialects, which gave them an additional charm. It was delightful to hear her

carol off in sprightly style, and with an animated air, some of those generous-spirited old Jacobite songs, once current among the adherents of the Pretender in Scotland, in which he is designated by the appellation of "The Young Chevalier."

These songs were much relished by Scott, notwithstanding his loyalty; for the unfortunate "Chevalier" has always been a hero of romance with him, as he has with many other stanch adherents to the house of Hanover, now that the Stuart line has lost all its terrors. In speaking on the subject, Scott mentioned as a curious fact, that, among the papers of the "Chevalier," which had been submitted by government to his inspection, he had found a memorial to Charles from some adherents in America, dated 1778, proposing to set up his standard in the back settlements. I regret that, at the time, I did not make more particular inquiries of Scott on the subject; the document in question, however, in all probability, still exists among the Pretender's papers, which are in the possession of the British Government.

When I retired for the night, I found it almost impossible to sleep; the idea of being under the roof of Scott, of being on the borders of the Tweed, in the very centre of that region which had for some time past been the favourite scene of romantic fiction, and above all the recollections of the ramble I had taken, the company in which

I had taken it, and the conversation which had passed, all fermented in my mind, and nearly drove sleep from my pillow.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

(From "Abbotsford")

RICHARD THE FIRST, CALLED THE LION-HEART

IN the year of our Lord one thousand one hundred and eighty-nine, Richard of the Lion Heart succeeded to the throne of King Henry the Second, whose paternal heart he had done so much to break. He had been, as we have seen, a rebel from his boyhood; but, the moment he became a King against whom others might rebel, he found out that rebellion was a great wickedness. In the heat of this pious discovery, he punished all the leading people who had befriended him against his father. He could scarcely have done anything that would have been a better instance of his real nature, or a better warning to fawners and parasites not to trust in lion-hearted princes.

He likewise put his late father's treasurer in chains, and locked him up in a dungeon from which he was not set free until he had relinquished, not only all the Crown treasure, but all his own money too. So, Richard certainly got the Lion's share of the wealth of this wretched treasurer, whether he had a Lion's heart or not.

He was crowned King of England, with great pomp, at Westminster: walking to the Cathedral under a silken canopy stretched on the tops of four lances, each carried by a great lord. On the day of his coronation, a dreadful murdering of the Jews took place, which seems to have given great delight to numbers of savage persons calling themselves Christians. The King had issued a proclamation forbidding the Jews (who were generally hated, though they were the most useful merchants in England) to appear at the ceremony; but as they had assembled in London from all parts, bringing presents to show their respect for the new Sovereign, some of them ventured down to Westminster Hall with their gifts; which were very readily accepted. It is supposed, now, that some noisy fellow in the crowd, pretending to be a very delicate Christian, set up a howl at this, and struck a Jew who was trying to get in at the Hall door with his present. A riot arose. The Jews who had got into the Hall, were driven forth; and some of the rabble cried out that the new King had commanded the unbelieving race to be put to death. Thereupon the crowd rushed through the narrow streets of the city, slaughtering all the Jews they met; and when they could find no more out of doors (on account of their having fled to their houses, and fastened themselves in), they ran madly about, breaking open all the houses where the Jews lived, rushing

in and stabbing or spearing them, sometimes even flinging old people and children out of windows into blazing fires they had lighted up below. This great cruelty lasted four and twenty hours, and only three men were punished for it. Even they forfeited their lives not for murdering and robbing the Jews, but for burning the houses of some Christians.

King Richard, who was a strong, restless, burly man, with one idea always in his head, and that the very troublesome idea of breaking the heads of other men, was mightily impatient to go on a Crusade to the Holy Land, with a great army. As great armies could not be raised to go, even to the Holy Land, without a great deal of money, he sold the Crown domains, and even the high offices of State; recklessly appointing noblemen to rule over his English subjects, not because they were fit to govern, but because they could pay high for the privilege. In this way, and by selling pardons at a dear rate, and by varieties of avarice and oppression, he scraped together a large treasure. He then appointed two bishops to take care of his kingdom in his absence, and gave great powers and possessions to his brother John, to secure his friendship. John would rather have been made Regent of England; but he was a sly man, and friendly to the expedition; saying to himself, no doubt, "The more fighting, the more

chance of my brother being killed; and when he *is* killed, then I become King John!"

Before the newly levied army departed from England, the recruits and the general populace distinguished themselves by astonishing cruelties on the unfortunate Jews: whom, in many large towns, they murdered by hundreds in the most horrible manner.

At York, a large body of Jews took refuge in the Castle, in the absence of its Governor, after the wives and children of many of them had been slain before their eyes. Presently came the Governor and demanded admission. "How can we give it thee, O Governor!" said the Jews upon the walls, "when, if we open the gate by so much as the width of a foot, the roaring crowd behind thee will press in and kill us!"

Upon this, the unjust Governor became angry, and told the people that he approved of their killing those Jews; and a mischievous maniac of a friar, dressed all in white, put himself at the head of the assault, and they assaulted the Castle for three days.

Then, said JOCEN, the head Jew (who was a Rabbi or Priest), to the rest, "Brethren, there is no hope for us with the Christians who are hammering at the gates and walls, and who must soon break in. As we and our wives and children must die, either by Christian hands, or by our

own, let it be by our own. Let us destroy by fire what jewels and other treasure we have here, then fire the castle, and then perish!"

A few could not resolve to do this, but the greater part complied. They made a blazing heap of all their valuables, and, when those were consumed, set the castle in flames. While the flames roared and crackled around them, and, shooting up into the sky, turned it blood-red, Jocen cut the throat of his beloved wife, and stabbed himself. All the others who had wives or children, did the like dreadful deed. When the populace broke in, they found (except the trembling few, cowering in corners, whom they soon killed) only heaps of greasy cinders, with here and there something like part of the blackened trunk of a burnt tree, but which had lately been a human creature, formed by the beneficent hand of the Creator as they were.

After this bad beginning, Richard and his troops went on, in no very good manner, with the Holy Crusade. It was undertaken jointly by the King of England and his old friend Philip of France. They commenced the business by reviewing their forces, to the number of one hundred thousand men. Afterwards, they severally embarked their troops for Messina, in Sicily, which was appointed as the next place of meeting.

King Richard's sister had married the King of this place, but he was dead; and his uncle TAN-

CRED had usurped the crown, cast the Royal Widow into prison, and possessed himself of her estates. Richard fiercely demanded his sister's release, the restoration of her lands, and (according to the Royal custom of the Island) that she should have a golden chair, a golden table, four and twenty silver cups and four and twenty silver dishes. As he was too powerful to be successfully resisted, Tancred yielded to his demands; and then the French King grew jealous and complained that the English King wanted to be absolute in the Island of Messina and everywhere else. Richard, however, cared little or nothing for this complaint, and in consideration of a present of twenty thousand pieces of gold, promised his pretty little nephew ARTHUR, then a child of two years old, in marriage to Tancred's daughter. We shall hear again of pretty little Arthur by and by.

This Sicilian affair arranged without anybody's brains being knocked out (which must have rather disappointed him), King Richard took his sister away, and also a fair lady named BERENGARIA, with whom he had fallen in love in France, and whom his mother, Queen Eleanor (so long in prison, you remember, but released by Richard on his coming to the Throne), had brought out there to be his wife; and sailed with them for Cyprus.

He soon had the pleasure of fighting the King

of the Island of Cyprus, for allowing his subjects to pillage some of the English troops who were shipwrecked on the shore; and easily conquering this poor monarch, he seized his only daughter, to be a companion to the lady Berengaria, and put the King himself into silver fetters. He then sailed away again with his mother, sister, wife, and the captive princess; and soon arrived before the town of Acre, which the French King with his fleet was besieging from the sea. But the French King was in no triumphant condition, for his army had been thinned by the swords of the Saracens, and wasted by the plague; and SALADIN, the brave Sultan of the Turks, at the head of a numerous army, was at that time gallantly defending the place from the hills that rise above it.

Wherever the united army of Crusaders went, they agreed in few points except in gaming, drinking, and quarrelling, in a most unholy manner; in debauching the people among whom they tarried, whether they were friends or foes; and in carrying disturbance and ruin into quiet places. The French King was jealous of the English King, and the English King was jealous of the French King, and the disorderly and violent soldiers of the two nations were jealous of one another; consequently, the two Kings could not at first agree, even upon a joint assault on Acre; but when they did make up their quarrel for that

purpose, the Saracens promised to yield the town, to give up to the Christians the wood of the Holy Cross, to set at liberty all their Christian captives, and to pay two hundred thousand pieces of gold. All this was to be done within forty days; but, not being done, King Richard ordered some three thousand Saracen prisoners to be brought out in the front of his camp, and there, in full view of their own countrymen to be butchered.

The French King had no part in this crime; for he was by that time travelling homeward with the greater part of his men; being offended by the overbearing conduct of the English King; being anxious to look after his own dominions; and being ill, besides, from the unwholesome air of that hot and sandy country. King Richard carried on the war without him; and remained in the East, meeting with a variety of adventures, nearly a year and a half. Every night when his army was on the march, and came to a halt, the heralds cried out three times, to remind all the soldiers of the cause in which they were engaged, "Save the Holy Sepulchre!" and then all the soldiers knelt, and said "Amen!" Marching or encamping, the army had continually to strive with the hot air of the glaring desert, or with the Saracen soldiers animated and directed by the brave Saladin, or with both together. Sickness and death, battle and wounds, were always among them; but through every difficulty King Richard

fought like a giant, and worked like a common labourer. Long and long after he was quiet in his grave, his terrible battle-ax, with twenty English pounds of English steel in its mighty head, was a legend among the Saracens; and when all the Saracen and Christian hosts had been dust for many a year, if a Saracen horse started at any object by the wayside, his rider would exclaim, "What dost thou fear, Fool? Dost thou think King Richard is behind it?"

No one admired this King's renown for bravery more than Saladin himself, who was a generous and gallant enemy. When Richard lay ill of a fever, Saladin sent him fresh fruits from Damascus, and snow from the mountain-tops. Courtly messages and compliments were frequently exchanged between them—and then King Richard would mount his horse and kill as many Saracens as he could; and Saladin would mount his, and kill as many Christians as he could. In this way King Richard fought to his heart's content at Arsoof and at Jaffa; and finding himself with nothing exciting to do at Ascalon, except to rebuild, for his own defence, some fortifications there which the Saracens had destroyed, he kicked his ally the Duke of Austria, for being too proud to work at them.

The army at last came within sight of the Holy City of Jerusalem; but, being then a mere nest of jealousy, and quarrelling and fighting,

soon retired, and agreed with the Saracens upon a truce for three years, three months, three days, and three hours. Then, the English Christians, protected by the noble Saladin from Saracen revenge, visited Our Saviour's tomb; and then King Richard embarked with a small force at Acre to return home.

But he was shipwrecked in the Adriatic Sea, and was fain to pass through Germany, under an assumed name. Now, there were many people in Germany who had served in the Holy Land under that proud Duke of Austria who had been kicked; and some of them, easily recognizing a man so remarkable as King Richard, carried their intelligence to the kicked Duke, who straightway took him prisoner at a little inn near Viennā.

The Duke's master the Emperor of Germany, and the King of France, were equally delighted to have so troublesome a monarch in safe keeping. Friendships which are founded on a partnership in doing wrong, are never true: and the King of France was now quite as heartily King Richard's foe, as he had ever been his friend in his unnatural conduct to his father. He monstrously pretended that King Richard had designed to poison him in the East; he charged him with having murdered, there, a man whom he had in truth befriended; he bribed the Emperor of Germany to keep him close prisoner; and, finally, through the plotting of these two princes, Richard was

brought before the German legislature, charged with the foregoing crimes, and many others. But he defended himself so well, that many of the assembly were moved to tears by his eloquence and earnestness. It was decided that he should be treated, during the rest of his captivity in a manner more becoming his dignity than he had been, and that he should be set free on the payment of a heavy ransom. This ransom the English people willingly raised. When Queen Eleanor took it over to Germany, it was at first evaded and refused. But she appealed to the honour of the princes of all the German Empire in behalf of her son, and appealed so well that it was accepted, and the King released. Thereupon, the King of France wrote to Prince John—"Take care of thyself. The devil is unchained!"

Prince John had reason to fear his brother, for he had been a traitor to him in his captivity. He had secretly joined the French King; had vowed to the English nobles and people that his brother was dead; and had vainly tried to seize the crown. He was now in France, at a place called Evreux. Being the meanest and basest of men, he contrived a mean and base expedient for making himself acceptable to his brother. He invited the French officers of the garrison in that town to dinner, murdered them all, and then took the fortress. With this recommendation to the good will of a lion-hearted monarch, he hastened to

King Richard, fell on his knees before him, and obtained the intercession of Queen Eleanor. "I forgive him," said the King, "and I hope I may forget the injury he has done me, as easily as I know he will forget my pardon."

While King Richard was in Sicily, there had been trouble in his dominions at home: one of the bishops whom he had left in charge thereof, arresting the other; and making, in his pride and ambition, as great a show as if he were King himself. But the King hearing of it at Messina, and appointing a new Regency, this LONGCHAMP (for that was his name) had fled to France in a woman's dress, and had there been encouraged and supported by the French King. With all these causes of offence against Philip in his mind, King Richard had no sooner been welcomed home by his enthusiastic subjects with great display and splendour, and had no sooner been crowned afresh at Winchester, than he resolved to show the French King that the Devil was unchained indeed, and made war against him with great fury.

There was fresh trouble at home about this time, arising out of the discontents of the poor people, who complained that they were far more heavily taxed than the rich, and who found a spirited champion in WILLIAM FITZ OSBERT, called LONGBEARD. He became the leader of a secret society, comprising fifty thousand men;

he was seized by surprise; he stabbed the citizen who first laid hands upon him; and retreated, bravely fighting, to a church, which he maintained four days, until he was dislodged by fire, and run through the body as he came out. He was not killed, though; for he was dragged, half dead, at the tail of a horse to Smithfield, and there hanged. Death was long a favourite remedy for silencing the people's advocates; but as we go on with this history, I fancy we shall find them difficult to make an end of, for all that.

The French war, delayed occasionally by a truce, was still in progress when a certain Lord named VIDOMAR, Viscount of Limoges, chanced to find in his ground a treasure of ancient coins. As the King's vassal, he sent the King half of it; but the King claimed the whole. The lord refused to yield the whole. The king besieged the lord in his castle, swore that he would take the castle by storm, and hang every man of its defenders on the battlements.

There was a strange old song in that part of the country, to the effect that in Limoges an arrow would be made by which King Richard would die. It may be that BERTRAND DE GOURDON, a young man who was one of the defenders of the castle, had often sung it or heard it sung of a winter night, and remembered it when he saw, from his post upon the ramparts, the King attended only by his chief officer riding below the

walls surveying the place. He drew an arrow to the head, took steady aim, said between his teeth, "Now I pray to God speed thee well, arrow!" discharged it, and struck the King in the left shoulder.

Although the wound was not at first considered dangerous, it was severe enough to cause the King to retire to his tent, and direct the assault to be made without him. The castle was taken, and every man of its defenders was hanged, as the King had sworn all should be, except Bertrand de Gourdon, who was reserved until the royal pleasure respecting him should be known.

By that time unskilful treatment had made the wound mortal, and the King knew that he was dying. He directed Bertrand to be brought into his tent. The young man was brought there, heavily chained. King Richard looked at him steadily. He looked, as steadily, at the King.

"Knave!" said King Richard. "What have I done to thee that thou shouldest take my life?"

"What hast thou done to me?" replied the young man. "With thine own hands thou hast killed my father and my two brothers. Myself thou wouldest have hanged. Let me die now, by any torture that thou wilt. My comfort is, that no torture can save thee. Thou too must die; and through me, the world is quit of thee!"

Again the King looked at the young man

steadily. Again the young man looked steadily at him. Perhaps some remembrance of his generous enemy Saladin, who was not a Christian, came into the mind of the dying King.

"Youth!" he said, "I forgive thee. Go unhurt!"

Then, turning to the chief officer who had been riding in his company when he received the wound, King Richard said:

"Take off his chains, give him a hundred shillings, and let him depart."

He sunk down on his couch, and a dark mist seemed in his weakened eyes to fill the tent wherein he had so often rested, and he died. His age was forty-two; he had reigned ten years. His last command was not obeyed; for the chief officer flayed Bertrand de Gourdon alive, and hanged him.

There is an old tune yet known—a sorrowful air will sometimes outlive many generations of strong men, and even last longer than battle-axes with twenty pounds of steel in the head—by which this King is said to have been discovered in his captivity. BLONDEL, a favourite Minstrel of King Richard, as the story relates, faithfully seeking his Royal master, went singing it outside the gloomy walls of many foreign fortresses and prisons; until at last he heard it echoed from within a dungeon, and knew the voice, and cried out in ecstasy, "O Richard, O my King!" You may believe it, if you like; it would be easy to

believe worse things. Richard was himself a Minstrel and a Poet. If he had not been a Prince too, he might have been a better man perhaps, and might have gone out of the world with less bloodshed and waste of life to answer for.

CHARLES DICKENS.

PETER THE GREAT

PETER ALEXIOWITZ, Czar of Russia, had already made his name feared by the battle in which he defeated the Turks in 1697, and by the conquest of Azov, which gave him the control of the Black Sea. But the actions which won him the title of "The Great" were far more glorious than conquests.

Russia occupies the whole of Northern Asia and Europe, and from the frontiers of China extends 1,500 leagues to the borders of Poland and Sweden. Yet the existence of this immense country was not even realized by Europe before the time of the Czar Peter. The Russians were less civilized than the Mexicans at the time of their discovery by Cortez; born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they were sunk deep in ignorance, and unacquainted with the arts and sciences, and so insensible of their use that they had no industry. An old law, held sacred among them, forbade them, on pain of death, to leave their own country without the permission of their Patriarch. Yet this law, avowedly enacted to prevent them from realizing their state of bondage, was agreeable to a people

who, in the depths of their ignorance and misery, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The era of the Russians began with the creation of the world; they reckoned up 7,207 years at the beginning of the last century, without being able to give any reason why they did so. The first day of the year corresponded to our 13th of September. The reason they gave for this was that it was probable that God created the world in autumn, in a season when the fruits of the earth are in full maturity!

Thus the only traces of knowledge found among them were founded on gross mistakes; not one of them suspected that autumn in Russia might be spring in another country in the antipodes. Not long before, the people were for burning the secretary of the Persian ambassador, because he had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not even know the use of figures, but in all their calculations made use of little beads strung on wire; and this was their method of reckoning in all their counting-houses, and even in the treasury of the Czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the Greek Church, but intermingled with superstitions, to which they firmly adhered in proportion to their absurdity and their exacting nature. Few Russians dare eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is portrayed in form of a dove. They regularly kept four Lents a year, and during

that time might eat neither eggs nor milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the Czar and the Patriarch. The authority of the latter was as boundless as the people's ignorance. He had power of life and death, and inflicted the cruelest punishments, from which there was no appeal. Twice a year he rode in solemn procession, ceremoniously attended by all the clergy; and the people prostrated themselves in the streets before him, like the Tartars before their Grand Lama.

They practised confession, but only in the case of the greatest crimes; and then absolution was held necessary, but not repentance; they believed themselves purified in God's sight as soon as they received the priest's benediction. Thus they passed without remorse straight from confession to theft or murder; so that a practice which, in the case of other Christians, acts as a deterrent, was, in their case, only an incentive to crime. They scrupled to drink milk on a fast-day, but on festivals fathers of families, priests, matrons and maids got inebriated with brandy. As in other countries they had religious differences among themselves, but the most important cause of dispute was whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or with three, and a certain Jacob Nursoff had, during a previous reign, raised a rebellion on this question.

The Czar, in his vast kingdom, had many subjects who were not Christians; the Tartars, on the west coast of the Caspian, and the Palus Mæotis were Mahometans; while the Siberians, Ostiacs and Samoides, who live near the Baltic, were pagans. Some of these were idolators, and some were without God in the world; still, in spite of that, the Swedes, who were sent as prisoners among them, report more favourably of their manners than those of the ancient Russians.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education which tended to increase the barbarity of his part of the world. His disposition led him to like strangers before he knew they could be useful to him. Le Fort was the first instrument that he made use of to change the face of Russia. Peter's mighty genius, checked but not destroyed by a barbarous education, suddenly broke out; he resolved to act a man's part, to hold command of men and to create a new nation. Several princes before him had renounced their thrones, from distaste for public business, but there was no instance of a prince resigning that he might learn to rule better, as Peter the Great did. He left Russia in 1698, before the completion of the second year of his reign, and took a journey into Holland, under an ordinary name, as if he were the domestic servant of M. le Fort, whom he appointed ambassador-extraordinary to the States-

General. When he reached Amsterdam he entered his name on the list of ships'-carpenters to the Indian Admiralty, and worked in the dockyard like other carpenters. In his leisure time he learned those branches of mathematics which might prove useful to a prince, *e. g.,* such as related to fortifications, navigation, and the making of plans. He went into the workmen's shops, examined all their manufactures, and let nothing escape his notice. Thence he passed to England, where he perfected himself in the science of shipbuilding, and returning to Holland, carefully investigated everything which might be of use in his own country.

At last, after two years of travel and labour which nobody else would have willingly undergone, he reappeared in Russia, bringing thither with him the arts of Europe. A band of artists of all kinds followed him, and then for the first time great Russian vessels were to be seen on the Black Sea, the Baltic, and even on the ocean. Imposing buildings of architectural merit were set up amidst the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses and libraries. The great towns were civilized; and gradually, though not without difficulty, the dress and customs of the people were changed, so that the Russians learned by degrees what social life really is. Even their superstitions were abolished, the Czar declared head of the Church, and the in-

fluence of the Patriarch suppressed. This last undertaking would have cost a less absolute Prince his throne and his life, but in the case of Peter not only succeeded, but assured his success in all his other innovations.

Peter, having subdued the ignorant and barbarous clerical orders, dared to venture to educate them, and so ran the risk of making them a power in the State—but he believed that he was strong enough to take this risk.

In the few monasteries which remained he had philosophy and theology taught; though this theology was only a survival of the age of barbarity from which Peter had rescued his country. A credible witness assured the writer that he had been present at a public debate, where the question was whether the use of tobacco was a sin; the proposer argued that it was lawful to intoxicate oneself with brandy, but not to smoke, because the Holy Scriptures say that, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

The monks were not content with the reform. Scarcely had the Czar set up printing-presses than they made use of them to abuse him. They called him Antichrist, because he had the men's beards cut off, and because post-mortem dissection was practised in his academy. But another monk, who wanted to make his fortune, wrote refuting this

argument, and proving that Peter was not Antichrist because the number 666 was not included in this name! The author of the libel was broken on the wheel, and his opponent made Bishop of Rezan.

The Reformer of Russia carried a law which puts to shame many a civilized state; by this law no member of the civil service, no "bourgeois" with an established position, and no minor, might enter a monastery. Peter quite grasped the importance of not allowing useful subjects to take up idleness as a profession, nor those who had not yet command of the least part of their fortune to renounce liberty for ever.

The Czar not only, after the example of the Turkish Sultans, subjected the Church to the State, but, by a greater stroke of policy, he destroyed a band of troops like the Janissaries; and that which the Ottoman Emperors failed to do, he succeeded in very rapidly; he disbanded the Russian Janissaries, called Strelitz, who had dominated the Czars. This band, feared rather by its masters than its neighbours, consisted of about 30,000 infantry, half stationed at Moscow, and the other half at various points on the frontier; a member of the Strelitz only drew pay at the rate of four roubles a year, but privileges and abuses amply made up for this.

Peter at first formed a band of mercenaries, in which he had himself enrolled, and was not

too proud to begin as drummer-boy, so much were the people in need of good example. He became officer by degrees, made new regiments from time to time, and at last, finding himself at the head of disciplined troops, broke up the Strelitz, who were afraid to disobey him.

The cavalry resembled that of Poland, and that of France in the days when France was only a collection of fiefs. Russian noblemen took the field at their own expense, and engaged without discipline, and sometimes unarmed but for a sabre and a quiver; they were quite unused to discipline, and so were always beaten.

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by example and by punishment. For he himself served as a soldier and subordinate officer, and as Czar severely punished the "boyards," as the noblemen were called, who argued that the privilege of the nobility was to serve the State in their own way. He instituted a regular corps of artillery, and seized 500 church bells to cast cannon. By the year 1714 he had 13,000 brass cannon. He also formed a corps of dragoons, a form of arm both suited to Russian capacity and for which their horses, which are small, are particularly fit.

Russia has, at the present day (1738), thirty well-equipped regiments of dragoons of 1,000 men each.

He it was, too, who established the hussars

in Russia; he even got a school of engineers in a country where he was the first to understand the elements of geometry.

He was a good engineer himself; but he excelled especially in seamanship. As he was born with an extreme fear of the sea, it is all the greater credit to him that he was a good captain, a skilful pilot, a good seaman, and a clever carpenter. Yet in his young days he could not cross a bridge without a shudder; and he had the wooden shutters of his carriage closed on these occasions. It was his courage and will which led him to overcome this constitutional weakness.

He had built on the Gulf of Tanais, near Azov, a fine port; his idea was to keep a fleet of galleys there, and as he considered that these long, flat, light craft would be successful in the Baltic, he had 300 of them built in his favourite town of Petersburg. He taught his subjects how to construct them from ordinary fir, and then how to manage them.

The revenue of the Czar was inconsiderable, compared with the immense size of his empire. It never exceeded twenty-four millions, reckoning the mark as £50, as we do at the present moment; but, after all, only he is rich who can do great deeds. Russia is not densely populated, though the women are prolific and the men are strong. Peter himself, by the very civilization of

his empire, contributed to its population. The causes of the fact that there are still vast deserts in this great stretch of the continent are to be sought in frequent recruiting for unsuccessful wars, the transporting of nations from the Caspian to the Baltic, the destruction of life in the public works, the ravages wrought by disease (three-quarters of the children dying of small-pox), and the sad result of a means of government long savage, and barbarous even in its civilization. The present population of Russia consists of 500,000 noble families, 200,000 lawyers, rather more than 5,000,000 "bourgeois" and peasants paying a kind of poll-tax, and 600,000 men in the provinces conquered from the Swedes; so that this immense realm does not contain more than 14,000,000 men; that is to say, two-thirds of the population of France.

The Czar Peter, having transformed the manners, laws, militia, and the very face of his country, wished also to take a prominent part in commerce, which brings both riches to a State and advantages to the whole world. He intended to make Russia the centre of Asian and European trade. The Volga, Tanais, and Duna were to be united by canals, of which he drew the plans, and new ways were to be opened from the Baltic to the Euxine and the Caspian, and from these to the Northern Ocean.

In the year 1700 he decided to build on the

Baltic a port which should be the mart of the North, and a town which should be the capital of his empire, because the port of Archangel, ice-bound for nine months in the year, and the access to which necessitated a long and dangerous circuit, did not seem to him convenient. Already he was seeking a passage to China through the seas of the north-east, and the manufactures of Paris and of Pekin were to enrich his new town.

A road of 754 versts, made across marshes which had to be first filled, led from Moscow to his new town. Most of his projects were carried out by his own hand, and two Empresses who succeeded him successively carried out his policy whenever practicable, and only abandoned the impossible.

He made tours throughout his empire whenever he was not engaged in active warfare. But he travelled as lawgiver and natural philosopher. He carefully investigated natural conditions everywhere, and tried to correct and to perfect. He himself plumbed rivers and seas, had locks made, visited the timber-yards, examined mines, assayed metals, planned accurate maps, and worked at them with his own hand.

He built, in a desolate district, the imperial town of Petersburg, which, at the present day, contains 60,000 houses, and where there has arisen in our day a brilliant Court, and where

the greatest luxury is to be had. He built the port of Cronstadt on the Neva, Sainte-Croix on the frontiers of Persia, and forts in the Ukraine and in Siberia, docks at Archangel, Petersburg, Astrakan, and at Azov; besides arsenals and hospitals. His own residences he built small and in bad style, but his public buildings were magnificent and imposing. The sciences, which in other parts have been the slow product of centuries, were, by his care, introduced into his empire in full perfection. He made an academy, modelled on the famous institutions of Paris and London; at great expense men like Delisle, Bulfinger, Hermann, Bernouilli, were summoned to Petersburg. This academy is still in existence, and is now training Russian scholars.

He compelled the younger members of the nobility to travel to gain culture, and to return to Russia polished by foreign good breeding. I have met young Russians who were quite men of the world, and well-informed to boot.

It is shocking to realize that this reformer lacked the cardinal virtue of humanity. With so many virtues he was yet brutal in his pleasures, savage in his manner, and barbarous in seeking revenge. He civilized his people, but remained savage himself. He carried out his sentences with his own hands, and at a debauch at table he displayed his skill in cutting off heads. There are in Africa kings who shed the blood of their

subjects with their own hands, but these monarchs pass for barbarians. The death of one of his sons, who ought to have been punished or disinherited, would make his memory odious, if the good he did his subjects did not almost atone for his cruelty to his own family.

Such a man was Peter the Czar.

VOLTAIRE.

CATO

MARCUS CATO, we are told, was born at Tusculum, though (till he betook himself to civil and military affairs) he lived and was bred up in the country of the Sabines, where his father's estate lay. His ancestors seeming almost entirely unknown, he himself praises his father Marcus, as a worthy man and a brave soldier, and Cato, his great-grandfather, too, as one who had often obtained military prizes, and who, having lost five horses under him, received, on the account of his valour, the worth of them out of the public exchequer. Now it being the custom among the Romans to call those who, having no repute by birth, made themselves eminent by their own exertions, new men or upstarts, they called even Cato himself so, and so he confessed himself to be as to any public distinction or employment, but yet asserted that in the exploits and virtues of his ancestors he was very ancient. His third name originally was not Cato, but Priscus, though afterwards he had the surname of Cato, by reason of his abilities; for the Romans call a skilful or experienced man *Catus*.

He was of a ruddy complexion and grey-eyed; as the writer, who, with no good-will, made the following epigram upon him lets us see:—

"Porcius, who snarls at all in every place,
With his grey eyes, and with his fiery face,
Even after death will scarce admitted be
Into the infernal realms by Hecate."

He gained, in early life, a good habit of body by working with his own hands, and living temperately, and serving in war; and seemed to have an equal proportion both of health and strength. And he exerted and practised his eloquence through all the neighbourhood and little villages; thinking it as requisite as a second body, and an all but necessary organ to one who looks forward to something above a mere humble and inactive life. He would never refuse to be counsel for those who needed him, and was, indeed, early reckoned a good lawyer, and, ere long, a capable orator.

Hence his solidity and depth of character showed itself gradually more and more to those with whom he was concerned, and claimed, as it were, employment in great affairs and places of public command. Nor did he merely abstain from taking fees for his counsel and pleading, but did not even seem to put any high price on the honour

which proceeded from such kind of combats, seeming much more desirous to signalize himself in the camp and in real fights; and while yet but a youth, had his breast covered with scars he had received from the enemy: being (as he himself says) but seventeen years old when he made his first campaign; in the time when Hannibal, in the height of his success, was burning and pillaging all Italy. In engagements he would strike boldly, without flinching, stand firm to his ground, fix a bold countenance upon his enemies, and with a harsh threatening voice accost them, justly thinking himself and telling others that such a rugged kind of behaviour sometimes terrifies the enemy more than the sword itself. In his marches he bore his own arms on foot, whilst one servant only followed, to carry the provision for his table, with whom he is said never to have been angry or hasty whilst he made ready his dinner or supper, but would, for the most part, when he was free from military duty, assist and help him himself to dress it. When he was with the army, he used to drink only water; unless, perhaps, when extremely thirsty, he might mingle it with a little vinegar, or if he found his strength fail him, take a little wine.

The little country house of Manius Curius, who had been thrice carried in triumph, happened to be near his farm; so that often going thither, and contemplating the small compass of

the place, and plainness of the dwelling, he formed an idea of the mind of the person, who being one of the greatest of the Romans, and having subdued the most warlike nations, nay, had driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, now, after three triumphs, was contented to dig in so small a piece of ground, and live in such a cottage. Here it was that the ambassadors of the Samnites, finding him boiling turnips in the chimney corner, offered him a present of gold; but he sent them away with this saying; that he, who was content with such a supper, had no need of gold; and that he thought it more honourable to conquer those who possessed the gold, than to possess the gold itself. Cato, after reflecting upon these things, used to return and, reviewing his own farm, his servants, and housekeeping, increase his labour and retrench all superfluous expenses.

When Fabius Maximus took Tarentum, Cato, being then but a youth, was a soldier under him; and being lodged with one Nearchus, a Pythagorean, desired to understand some of his doctrine, and hearing from him the language, which Plato also uses—that pleasure is evil's chief bait; the body the principal calamity of the soul; and that those thoughts which most separate and take it off from the affections of the body most enfranchise and purify it; he fell in love the more with frugality and temperance. With this exception, he is said not to have studied Greek un-

til when he was pretty old; and in rhetoric, to have then profited a little by Thucydides, but more by Demosthenes; his writings, however, are considerably embellished with Greek sayings and stories; nay, many of these, translated word for word, are placed with his own apophthegms and sentences.

There was a man of the highest rank, and very influential among the Romans, called Valerius Flaccus, who was singularly skilful in discerning excellence yet in the bud, and also much disposed to nourish and advance it. He, it seems, had lands bordering upon Cato's: nor could he but admire when he understood from his servants the manner of his living, how he laboured with his own hands, went on foot betimes in the morning to the courts to assist those who wanted his counsel: how, returning home again, when it was winter, he would throw a loose frock over his shoulders, and in the summer time would work without anything on among his domestics, sit down with them, eat of the same bread, and drink of the same wine. When they spoke, also, of other good qualities, his fair dealing and moderation, mentioning also some of his wise sayings, he ordered that he should be invited to supper; and thus becoming personally assured of his fine temper and his superior character, which, like a plant, seemed only to require culture and a better situation, he

urged and persuaded him to apply himself to state affairs at Rome. Thither, therefore, he went, and by his pleading soon gained many friends and admirers; but, Valerius chiefly assisting his promotion, he first of all got appointed tribune in the army, and afterwards was made quæstor, or treasurer. And now becoming eminent and noted, he passed, with Valerius himself, through the greatest commands, being first his colleague as consul, and then censor. But among all the ancient senators, he most attached himself to Fabius Maximus; not so much for the honour of his person, and the greatness of his power, as that he might have before him his habit and manner of life, as the best examples to follow; and so he did not hesitate to oppose Scipio the Great, who, being then but a young man, seemed to set himself against the power of Fabius, and to be envied by him. For being sent together with him as treasurer, when he saw him, according to his natural custom, make great expenses, and distribute among the soldiers without sparing, he freely told him that the expense in itself was not the greatest thing to be considered, but that he was corrupting the frugality of the soldiers, by giving them the means to abandon themselves to unnecessary pleasures and luxuries. Scipio answered, that he had no need for so accurate a treasurer (bearing on as he was, so to say, full sail to the war), and that he

owed the people an account of his actions, and not of the money he spent. Hereupon Cato returned from Sicily and, together with Fabius, made loud complaints in the open senate of Scipio's lavishing unspeakable sums, and childishly loitering away his time in wrestling matches and comedies, as if he were not to make war, but holiday; and thus succeeded in getting some of the tribunes of the people sent to call him back to Rome, in case the accusations should prove true. But Scipio demonstrating, as it were, to them, by his preparations, the coming victory, and, being found merely to be living pleasantly with his friends, when there was nothing else to do, but in no respect because of that easiness and liberality at all the more negligent in things of consequence and moment, without impediment, set sail toward the war.

Cato grew more and more powerful by his eloquence, so that he was commonly called the Roman Demosthenes; but his manner of life was yet more famous and talked of. For oratorical skill was, as an accomplishment, commonly studied and sought after by all young men; but he was very rare who would cultivate the old habits of bodily labour, or prefer a light supper, and a breakfast which never saw the fire, or be in love with poor clothes and a homely lodging, or could set his ambition rather on doing without luxuries than on possessing them. For now

the state, unable to keep its purity by reason of its greatness, and having so many affairs, and people from all parts under its government, was fain to admit many mixed customs and new examples of living. With reason, therefore, everybody admired Cato, when they saw others sink under labours and grow effeminate by pleasures; and yet beheld him unconquered by either, and that not only when he was young and desirous of honour, but also when old and grey-headed, after a consulship and triumph; like some famous victor in the games, persevering in his exercise and maintaining his character to the very last. He himself says that he never wore a suit of clothes which cost more than a hundred drachmas; and that, when he was general and consul, he drank the same wine which his workmen did; and that the meat or fish which was bought in the meat-market for his dinner did not cost above thirty *asses*. All which was for the sake of the commonwealth, that so his body might be the hardier for the war. Having a piece of embroidered Babylonian tapestry left him, he sold it; because none of his farmhouses were so much as plastered. Nor did he ever buy a slave for above fifteen hundred drachmas; as he did not seek for effeminate and handsome ones, but able sturdy workmen, horse-keepers and cow-herds: and these he thought ought to be sold again, when they grew old, and no useless servants fed in the

house. In short, he reckoned nothing a good bargain which was superfluous; but whatever it was, though sold for a farthing, he would think it a great price, if you had no need of it; and was for the purchase of lands for sowing and feeding, rather than grounds for sweeping and watering.

Some imputed these things to petty avarice, but others approved of him, as if he had only the more strictly denied himself for the rectifying and amending of others. Yet certainly, in my judgment, it marks an over-rigid temper for a man to take the work out of his servants as out of brute beasts, turning them off and selling them in their old age, and thinking there ought to be no further commerce between man and man than whilst there arises some profit by it. We see that kindness or humanity has a larger field than bare justice to exercise itself in; law and justice we cannot, in the nature of things, employ on others than men; but we may extend our goodness and charity even to irrational creatures; and such acts flow from a gentle nature, as water from an abundant spring. It is doubtless the part of a kind-natured man to keep even worn-out horses and dogs, and not only take care of them when they are foals and whelps, but also when they are grown old. The Athenians, when they built their Hecatompedon, turned those mules loose to feed freely which they had

observed to have done the hardest labour. One of these (they say) came once of itself to offer its service, and ran along with, nay, and went before, the teams which drew the wagons up to the acropolis, as if it would incite and encourage them to draw more stoutly; upon which there passed a vote that the creature should be kept at the public charge even till it died. The graves of Cimon's horses, which thrice won the Olympian races, are yet to be seen close by his own monument. Old Xanthippus, too (amongst many others who buried the dogs they had bred up), entombed his which swam after his galley to Salamis, when the people fled from Athens, on the top of a cliff, which they call the Dog's Tomb to this day. Nor are we to use living creatures like old shoes or dishes, and throw them away when they are worn out or broken with service; but if it were for nothing else, but by way of study and practice in humanity, a man ought always to prehabituate himself in these things to be of a kind and sweet disposition. As to myself, I would not so much as sell my draught ox on the account of his age, much less for a small piece of money sell a poor old man, and so chase him, as it were, from his own country, by turning him not only out of the place where he has lived a long while, but also out of the manner of living he has been accustomed to, and that more especially when he would be as useless

to the buyer as to the seller. Yet Cato for all this glories that he left that very horse in Spain which he used in the wars when he was consul, only because he would not put the public to the charge of his freight. Whether these acts are to be ascribed to the greatness or pettiness of his spirit, let everyone argue as they please.

For his general temperance, however, and self-control he really deserves the highest admiration. For when he commanded the army, he never took for himself, and those that belonged to him, above three bushels of wheat for a month, and somewhat less than a bushel and a half a day of barley for his baggage-cattle. And when he entered upon the government of Sardinia, where his predecessors had been used to require tents, bedding, and clothes upon the public account, and to charge the state heavily with the cost of provisions and entertainments for a great train of servants and friends, the difference he showed in his economy was something incredible. There was nothing of any sort for which he put the public to expense; he would walk without a carriage to visit the cities, with one only of the common town officers, who carried his dress, and a cup to offer libation with. Yet though he seemed thus easy and sparing to all who were under his power, he, on the other hand, showed most inflexible severity and strictness in what related to public justice, and was

rigorous and precise in what concerned the ordinances of the commonwealth; so that the Roman government never seemed more terrible, nor yet more mild than under his administration.

His very manner of speaking seemed to have such a kind of idea with it; for it was courteous, and yet forcible; pleasant, yet overwhelming; facetious, yet austere; sententious, and yet vehement; like Socrates, in the description of Plato, who seemed outwardly to those about him to be but a simple, talkative, blunt fellow; whilst at the bottom he was full of such gravity and matter, as would even move tears and touch the very hearts of his auditors. And, therefore, I know not what has persuaded some to say that Cato's style was chiefly like that of Lysias. However, let us leave those to judge of these things who profess most to distinguish between the several kinds of oratorical style in Latin; whilst we write down some of his memorable sayings; being of the opinion that a man's character appears much more by his words than, as some think it does, by his looks.

Being once desirous to dissuade the common people of Rome from their unseasonable and impetuous clamour for largesses and distributions of corn, he began thus to harangue them: "It is a difficult task, O citizens, to make speeches to the belly, which has no ears." Reproving, also,

their sumptuous habits, he said it was hard to preserve a city where a fish sold for more than an ox. He had a saying, also, that the Roman people were like sheep; for they, when single, do not obey, but when altogether in a flock, they follow their leaders: "So you," said he, "when you have got together in a body, let yourselves be guided by those whom singly you would never think of being advised by." Discoursing of the power of women: "Men," said he, "usually command women; but we command all men, and the women command us." But this, indeed, is borrowed from the sayings of Themistocles, who, when his son was making many demands of him by means of the mother, said, "O woman, the Athenians govern the Greeks; I govern the Athenians, but you govern me, and your son governs you; so let him use his power sparingly, since, simple as he is, he can do more than all the Greeks together." Another saying of Cato's was, that the Roman people did not only fix the value of such and such purple dyes, but also of such and such habits of life: "For," said he, "as dyers most of all dye such colours as they see to be most agreeable, so the young men learn, and zealously affect, what is most popular with you." He also exhorted them that, if they were grown great by their virtue and temperance, they should not change for the worse; but if intemperance and vice had made them great, they should

change for the better; for by that means they were grown indeed quite great enough. He would say, likewise, of men who wanted to be continually in office, that apparently they did not know their road; since they could not do without beadles to guide them on it. He also reproved the citizens for choosing still the same men as their magistrates: "For you will seem," said he, "either not to esteem government worth much, or to think few worthy to hold it." Speaking, too, of a certain enemy of his, who lived a very base and discreditable life: "It is considered," he said, "rather as a curse than a blessing on him, that this fellow's mother prays that she may leave him behind her." Pointing at one who had sold the land which his father had left him, and which lay near the seaside, he pretended to express his wonder at his being stronger even than the sea itself; for what it washed away with a great deal of labour, he with a great deal of ease drank away. When the senate, with a great deal of splendour, received King Eumenes on his visit to Rome, and the chief citizens strove who should be most about him, Cato appeared to regard him with suspicion and apprehension; and when one that stood by, too, took occasion to say that he was a very good prince and a great lover of the Romans: "It may be so," said Cato; "but by nature this same animal of a king is a kind of man-eater;" nor, indeed, were there ever

kings who deserved to be compared with Epaminondas, Pericles, Themistocles, Manius Curius, or Hamilcar, surnamed Barcas. He used to say, too, that his enemies envied him because he had to get up every day before light and neglect his own business to follow that of the public. He would also tell you that he had rather be deprived of the reward for doing well than not to suffer the punishment for doing ill; and that he could pardon all offenders but himself. The Romans having sent three ambassadors to Bithynia, of whom one was gouty, another had his skull trepanned, and the other seemed little better than a fool, Cato, laughing, gave out that the Romans had sent an embassy which had neither feet, head, nor heart. His interest being entreated by Scipio, on account of Polybius, for the Achæan exiles, and there happening to be a great discussion in the senate about it, some being for, and some against their return, Cato, standing up, thus delivered himself: "Here do we sit all day long, as if we had nothing to do but beat our brains whether these old Greeks should be carried to their graves by the bearers here or by those in Achæa." The senate voting their return, it seems that a few days after Polybius's friends further wished that it should be further moved in the senate that the said banished persons should receive again the honours which they first had in Achæa; and to this

purpose they sounded Cato for his opinion; but he, smiling, answered, that Polybius, Ulysses like, having escaped out of the Cyclops' den, wanted, it would seem, to go back again because he had left his cap and belt behind him. He used to assert, also, that wise men profited more by fools, than fools by wise men; for that wise men avoided the faults of fools, but that fools would not imitate the good examples of wise men. He would profess, too, that he was more taken with young men that blushed than with those who looked pale; and that he never desired to have a soldier that moved his hands too much in marching, and his feet too much in fighting; or snored louder than he shouted. Ridiculing a fat, overgrown man: "What use," said he, "can the state turn a man's body to, when all between the throat and groin is taken up by the belly?" When one who was much given to pleasures desired his acquaintance, begging his pardon, he said he could not live with a man whose palate was of a quicker sense than his heart. He would likewise say that the soul of a lover lived in the body of another: and that in his whole life he must repent of three things; one was, that he had trusted a secret to a woman; another that he went by water when he might have gone by land; the third, that he had remained one whole day without doing any business of moment. Applying himself to an old man who was commit-

ting some vice: "Friend," said he, "old age has of itself blemishes enough; do not you add to it the deformity of vice." Speaking to a tribune, who was reputed a poisoner, and was very violent for the bringing in of a bill, in order to make a certain law: "Young man," cried he, "I know not which would be better, to drink what you mix, or confirm what you would put up for a law." Being reviled by a fellow who lived a profligate and wicked life: "A contest," replied he, "is unequal between you and me: for you can hear ill words easily, and can as easily give them: but it is unpleasant to me to give such, and unusual to hear them." Such was his manner of expressing himself in his memorable sayings.

Being chosen consul, with his friend and familiar Valerius Flaccus, the government of that part of Spain which the Romans called the Hither Spain fell to his lot. Here, as he was engaged in reducing some of the tribes by force, and bringing over others by good words, a large army of barbarians fell upon him, so that there was danger of being disgracefully forced out again. He therefore called upon his neighbours, the Celtiberians, for help; and on their demanding two hundred talents for their assistance, everybody else thought it intolerable that even the Romans should promise barbarians a reward for their aid; but Cato said there was no discredit or harm in it; for, if they overcame,

they would pay them out of the enemy's purse, and not out of their own; but if they were overcome, there would be nobody left either to demand the reward or to pay it. However, he won that battle completely, and, after that, all his other affairs succeeded splendidly. Polybius says that, by his command, the walls of all the cities on this side the river Bætis were in one day's time demolished, and yet there were a great many of them full of brave and warlike men. Cato himself says that he took more cities than he stayed days in Spain. Neither is this a mere rhodomontade, if it be true that the number was four hundred. And though the soldiers themselves had got much in the fights, yet he distributed a pound of silver to every man of them, saying, it was better that many of the Romans should return home with silver, rather than a few with gold. For himself, he affirms, that of all the things that were taken, nothing came to him beyond what he ate and drank. "Neither do I find fault," continued he, "with those that seek to profit by these spoils, but I had rather compete in valour with the best, than in wealth with the richest, or with the most covetous in love of money." Nor did he merely keep himself clear from taking anything, but even all those who more immediately belonged to him. He had five servants with him in the army; one of whom called Paccus, bought three boys out of those

who were taken captive; which Cato coming to understand, the man, rather than venture into his presence, hanged himself. Cato sold the boys, and carried the price he got for them into the public exchequer.

Scipio the Great, being his enemy, and desiring, whilst he was carrying all things so successfully, to obstruct him, and take the affairs of Spain into his own hands, succeeded in getting himself appointed his successor in the government, and, making all possible haste, put a term to Cato's authority. But he, taking with him a convoy of five cohorts of foot and five hundred horse to attend him home, overthrew by the way the Lacetanians, and taking from them six hundred deserters, caused them all to be beheaded; upon which Scipio seemed to be in indignation, but Cato, in mock disparagement of himself, said, "Rome would become great indeed, if the most honourable and great men would not yield up the first place of valour to those who were more obscure, and when they who were of the commonalty (as he himself was) would contend in valour with those who were most eminent in birth and honour." The senate having voted to change nothing of what had been established by Cato, the government passed away under Scipio to no manner of purpose, in idleness and doing nothing; and so diminished his credit much more than Cato's. Nor did Cato, who now received

a triumph, remit after this and slacken the reins of virtue, as many do, who strive not so much for virtue's sake, as for vainglory, and having attained the highest honours, as the consulship and triumphs, pass the rest of their life in pleasure and idleness, and quit all public affairs. But he, like those who are just entered upon public life for the first time, and thirst after gaining honour and glory in some new office, strained himself, as if he were but just setting out; and offering still publicly his service to his friends and citizens, would give up neither his pleadings nor his soldiery.

He accompanied and assisted Tiberius Sempronius, as his lieutenant, when he went into Thrace and to the Danube; and, in the quality of tribune, went with Manius Acilius into Greece, against Antiochus the Great, who, after Hannibal, more than any one struck terror into the Romans. For having reduced once more under a single command almost the whole of Asia, all, namely, that Seleucus Nicator had possessed, and having brought into obedience many warlike nations of the barbarians, he longed to fall upon the Romans, as if they only were now worthy to fight with him. So across he came with his forces, pretending, as a specious cause of the war, that it was to free the Greeks, who had indeed no need of it, they having been but newly delivered from the power of King Philip and the

Macedonians, and made independent, with the free use of their own laws, by the goodness of the Romans themselves: so that all Greece was in commotion and excitement, having been corrupted by the hopes of royal aid which the popular leaders in their cities put them into. Manius, therefore, sent ambassadors to the different cities; and Titus Flamininus (as is written in the account of him) suppressed and quieted most of the attempts of the innovators, without any trouble. Cato brought over the Corinthians, those of Patræ and Ægium, and spent a good deal of time at Athens. There is also an oration of his said to be extant which he spoke in Greek to the people; in which he expressed his admiration of the virtue of the ancient Athenians, and signified that he came with a great deal of pleasure to be a spectator of the beauty and greatness of their city. But this is a fiction; for he spoke to the Athenians by an interpreter, though he was able to have spoken himself; but he wished to observe the usage of his own country, and laughed at those who admired nothing but what was in Greek. Jesting upon Postumius Albinus, who had written an historical work in Greek, and requested that allowances might be made for his attempt, he said that allowance indeed might be made if he had done it under the express compulsion of an Amphictyonic decree. The Athenians, he says, admired the quickness and

vehemence of his speech; for an interpreter would be very long in repeating what he expressed with a great deal of brevity; but on the whole he professed to believe that the words of the Greeks came only from their lips, whilst those of the Romans came from their hearts.

Now Antiochus, having occupied with his army the narrow passages about Thermopylæ, and added palisades and walls to the natural fortifications of the place, sat down there, thinking he had done enough to divert the war; and the Romans, indeed, seemed wholly to despair of forcing the passage; but Cato, calling to mind the compass and circuit which the Persians had formerly made to come at this place, went forth in the night, taking along with him part of the army. Whilst they were climbing up, the guide, who was a prisoner, missed the way, and wandering up and down by impracticable and precipitous paths, filled the soldiers with fear and despondency. Cato, perceiving the danger, commanded all the rest to halt, and stay where they were, whilst he himself, taking along with him one Lucius Manlius, a most expert man at climbing mountains, went forward with a great deal of labour and danger, in the dark night, and without the least moonshine, among the wild olive-trees and steep craggy rocks, there being nothing but precipices and darkness before their eyes, till they struck into a little pass which they thought

might lead down into the enemy's camp. There they put up marks upon some conspicuous peaks which surmount the hill called Callidromon, and, returning again, they led the army along with them to the said marks, till they got into their little path again, and there once made a halt; but when they began to go further, the path deserted them at a precipice, where they were in another strait and fear; nor did they perceive that they were all this while near the enemy. And now the day began to give some light, when they seemed to hear a noise, and presently after to see the Greek trenches and the guard at the foot of the rock. Here, therefore, Cato halted his forces, and commanded the troops from Firmum only, without the rest, to stick by him, as he had always found them faithful and ready. And when they came up and formed around him in close order, he thus spoke to them: "I desire," he said, "to take one of the enemy alive, that so I may understand what men there are who guard the passage; their number; and with what discipline, order, and preparation they expect us; but this feat," continued he, "must be an act of a great deal of quickness and boldness, such as that of lions, when they dart upon some timorous animal." Cato had no sooner thus expressed himself, but the Firmans forthwith rushed down the mountain, just as they were, upon the guard, and, falling unexpectedly upon them, affrighted and

dispersed them all. One armed man they took, and brought to Cato, who quickly learned from him that the rest of the forces lay in the narrow passage about the king; that those who kept the tops of the rocks were six hundred choice Ætolians. Cato, therefore, despising the smallness of their number and carelessness, forthwith drawing his sword, fell upon them with a great noise of trumpets and shouting. The enemy, perceiving them thus tumbling, as it were, upon them from the precipices, flew to the main body, and put all things into disorder there.

In the meantime, whilst Manius was forcing the works below, and pouring the thickest of his forces into the narrow passages, Antiochus was hit in the mouth with a stone, so that his teeth being beaten out by it, he felt such excessive pain, that he was fain to turn away with his horse; nor did any part of his army stand the shock of the Romans. Yet, though there seemed no reasonable hope of flight, where all paths were so difficult, and where there were deep marshes and steep rocks, which looked as if they were ready to receive those who should stumble, the fugitives, nevertheless, crowding and pressing together in the narrow passages, destroyed even one another in their terror of the swords and blows of the enemy. Cato (as it plainly appears) was never oversparing of his own praises, and seldom shunned boasting of any exploit; which quality,

indeed, he seems to have thought the natural accompaniment of great actions; and with these particular exploits he was highly puffed up; he says that those who saw him that day pursuing and slaying the enemies were ready to assert that Cato owed not so much to the public as the public did to Cato; nay, he adds, that Manius the consul, coming hot from the fight, embraced him for a great while, when both were all in a sweat; and then cried out with joy that neither he himself, no, nor all the people together, could make him a recompense equal to his actions. After the fight he was sent to Rome, that he himself might be the messenger of it: and so, with a favourable wind, he sailed to Brundusium, and in one day got from thence to Tarentum; and having travelled four days more, upon the fifth, counting from the time of his landing, he arrived at Rome, and so brought the first news of the victory himself; and filled the whole city with joy and sacrifices, and the people with the belief that they were able to conquer every sea and every land.

These are pretty nearly all the eminent actions of Cato relating to military affairs: in civil policy, he was of opinion that one chief duty consisted in accusing and indicting criminals. He himself prosecuted many, and he would also assist others who prosecuted them, nay, would even procure such, as he did the Petilii against Scipio; but

not being able to destroy him, by reason of the nobleness of his family, and the real greatness of his mind, which enabled him to trample all calumnies under foot, Cato at last would meddle no more with him; yet joining with the accusers against Scipio's brother Lucius, he succeeded in obtaining a sentence against him, which condemned him to the payment of a large sum of money to the state; and being insolvent, and in danger of being thrown into jail, he was, by the interposition of the tribunes of the people, with much ado dismissed. It is also said of Cato, that when he met a certain youth, who had effected the disgrace of one of his father's enemies, walking in the market-place, he shook him by the hand, telling him, that this was what we ought to sacrifice to our dead parents—not lambs and goats, but the tears and condemnations of their adversaries. But neither did he himself escape with impunity in his management of affairs; for if he gave his enemies but the least hold, he was still in danger, and exposed to be brought to justice. He is reported to have escaped at least fifty indictments; and one above the rest, which was the last, when he was eighty-six years old, about which time he uttered the well-known saying, that it was hard for him who had lived with one generation of men, to plead now before another. Neither did he make this the least of his lawsuits; for, four years after, when he was

fourscore and ten, he accused Servilius Galba: so that his life and actions extended, we may say, as Nestor's did, over three ordinary ages of man. For, having had many contests, as we have related, with Scipio the Great, about affairs of state, he continued them down to Scipio the younger, who was the adopted grandson of the former, and the son of that Paulus who overthrew Perseus and the Macedonians.

Ten years after his consulship, Cato stood for the office of censor, which was indeed the summit of all honour, and in a manner the highest step in civil affairs; for besides all other power, it had also that of an inquisition into everyone's life and manners. For the Romans thought that no marriage, or rearing of children, nay, no feast or drinking-bout, ought to be permitted according to everyone's appetite or fancy, without being examined and inquired into; being indeed of opinion that a man's character was much sooner perceived in things of this sort than in what is done publicly and in open day. They chose, therefore, two persons, one out of the patricians, the other out of the commons, who were to watch, correct, and punish, if anyone ran too much into voluptuousness, or transgressed the usual manner of life of his country; and these they called Censors. They had power to take away a horse, or expel out of the senate anyone who lived intemperately and out of

order. It was also their business to take an estimate of what everyone was worth, and to put down in registers everybody's birth and quality; besides many other prerogatives. And therefore the chief nobility opposed his pretensions to it. Jealousy prompted the patricians, who thought that it would be a stain to everybody's nobility, if men of no original honour should rise to the highest dignity and power; while others, conscious of their own evil practices, and of the violation of the laws and customs of their country, were afraid of the austerity of the man; which, in an office of such great power, was likely to prove most uncompromising and severe. And so, consulting among themselves, they brought forward seven candidates in opposition to him, who sedulously set themselves to court the people's favour by fair promises, as though what they wished for was indulgent and easy government. Cato, on the contrary, promising no such mildness, but plainly threatening evil livers, from the very hustings openly declared himself, and exclaiming that the city needed a great and thorough purgation, called upon the people, if they were wise, not to choose the gentlest, but the roughest of physicians; such a one, he said, he was, and Valerius Flaccus, one of the patricians, another; together with him, he doubted not but he should do something worth the while, and that by cutting to pieces and burning like a hydra

all luxury and voluptuousness. He added, too, that he saw all the rest endeavouring after the office with ill intent, because they were afraid of those who would exercise it justly, as they ought. And so truly great and so worthy of great men to be its leaders was, it would seem, the Roman people, that they did not fear the severity and grim countenance of Cato, but rejecting those smooth promisers who were ready to do all things to ingratiate themselves, they took him, together with Flaccus; obeying his recommendations not as though he were a candidate, but as if he had had the actual power of commanding and governing already.

Cato named, as chief of the senate, his friend and colleague Lucius Valerius Flaccus, and expelled, among many others, Lucius Quintius, who had been consul seven years before, and (which was greater honour to him than the consulship) brother to that Titus Flamininus who overthrew King Philip. The reason he had for his expulsion was this. Lucius, it seems, took along with him in all his commands a youth whom he had kept as his companion from the flower of his age, and to whom he gave as much power and respect as to the chiefest of his friends and relations.

Now it happened that Lucius being consular governor of one of the provinces, the youth setting himself down by him, as he used to do,

among other flatteries with which he played upon him, when he was in his cups, told him he loved him so dearly that, "though there was a show of gladiators to be seen at Rome, and I," he said, "had never beheld one in my life; and though I, as it were, longed to see a man killed, yet I made all possible haste to come to you." Upon this Lucius, returning his fondness, replied, "Do not be melancholy on that account; I can remedy that." Ordering therefore, forthwith, one of those condemned to die to be brought to the feast, together with the headsman and ax, he asked the youth if he wished to see him executed. The boy answering that he did, Lucius commanded the executioner to cut off his neck; and this several historians mention; and Cicero, indeed, in his dialogue *de Senectute,* introduces Cato relating it himself. But Livy says that he that was killed was a Gaulish deserter, and that Lucius did not execute him by the stroke of the executioner, but with his own hand; and that it is so stated in Cato's speech.

Lucius being thus expelled out of the senate by Cato, his brother took it very ill, and appealing to the people, desired that Cato should declare his reasons; and when he began to relate this transaction of the feast, Lucius endeavoured to deny it; but Cato challenging him to a formal investigation, he fell off and refused it, so that he was then acknowledged to suffer deservedly.

Afterwards, however, when there was some show at the theatre, he passed by the seats where those who had been consuls used to be placed, and taking his seat a great way off, excited the compassion of the common people, who presently with a great noise made him go forward, and as much as they could tried to set right and salve over what had happened. Manilius, also, who, according to the public expectation, would have been next consul, he threw out of the senate, because, in the presence of his daughter, and in open day, he had kissed his wife. He said that, as for himself, his wife never came into his arms except when there was great thunder; so that it was for jest with him, that it was a pleasure for him, when Jupiter thundered.

His treatment of Lucius, likewise the brother of Scipio, and one who had been honoured with a triumph, occasioned some odium against Cato; for he took his horse from him, and was thought to do it with a design of putting an affront on Scipio Africanus, now dead. But he gave most general annoyance by retrenching people's luxury; for though (most of the youth being thereby already corrupted) it seemed almost impossible to take it away with an open hand and directly, yet going, as it were, obliquely around, he caused all dress carriages, women's ornaments, household furniture, whose price exceeded one thousand five hundred drachmas, to be rated at ten times

as much as they were worth; intending by thus making the assessments greater, to increase the taxes paid upon them. He also ordained that upon every thousand *asses* of property of this kind, three should be paid, so that people, burdened with these extra charges, and seeing others of as good estates, but more frugal and sparing, paying less into the public exchequer, might be tired out of their prodigality. And thus, on the one side, not only those were disgusted at Cato who bore the taxes for the sake of their luxury, but those, too, who on the other side laid by their luxury for fear of the taxes. For people in general reckon that an order not to display their riches is equivalent to the taking away of their riches, because riches are seen much more in superfluous than in necessary things. Indeed this was what excited the wonder of Ariston the philosopher; that we account those who possess superfluous things more happy than those who abound with what is necessary and useful. But when one of his friends asked Scopas, the rich Thessalian, to give him some article of no great utility, saying that it was not a thing that he had any great need or use for himself, "In truth," replied he, "it is just these useless and unnecessary things that make my wealth and happiness." Thus the desire of riches does not proceed from a natural passion within us, but arises rather from vulgar out-of-doors opinion of other people.

Cato, notwithstanding, being little solicitous as to those who exclaimed against him, increased his austerity. He caused the pipes, through which some persons brought the public water into their houses and gardens, to be cut, and threw down all buildings which jutted out into the common streets. He beat down also the price in contracts for public works to the lowest and raised it in contracts for farming the taxes to the highest sum; by which proceedings he drew a great deal of hatred upon himself. Those who were of Titus Flamininus's party cancelled in the senate all the bargains and contracts made by him for the repairing and carrying on of the sacred and public buildings as unadvantageous to the commonwealth. They incited also the boldest of the tribunes of the people to accuse him and to fine him two talents. They likewise much opposed him in building the court or basilica, which he caused to be erected at the common charge, just by the senate-house, in the market-place, and called by his own name, the Porcian. However, the people, it seems, liked his censorship wondrously well; for, setting up a statue for him in the temple of the goddess of Health, they put an inscription under it, not recording his commands in war or his triumph, but to the effect that this was Cato the Censor, who, by his good discipline and wise and temperate ordinances, reclaimed the Roman commonwealth when it was declining and sink-

ing down into vice. Before this honour was done to himself, he used to laugh at those who loved such kind of things, saying, that they did not see that they were taking pride in the workmanship of brass-founders and painters; whereas the citizens bore about his best likeness in their breasts. And when any seemed to wonder that he should have never a statue, while many ordinary persons had one, "I would," said he, "much rather be asked, why I have not one, than why I have one." In short, he would not have any honest citizen endure to be praised, except it might prove advantageous to the commonwealth. Yet still he had passed the highest commendation on himself; for he tells us that those who did anything wrong, and were found fault with, used to say it was not worth while to blame them, for they were not Catos. He also adds, that they who awkwardly mimicked some of his actions were called left-handed Catos; and that the senate in perilous times would cast their eyes on him, as upon a pilot in a ship, and that often when he was not present they put off affairs of greatest consequence. These things are indeed also testified of him by others; for he had a great authority in the city, alike for his life, his eloquence, and his age.

He was also a good father, an excellent husband to his wife, and an extraordinary economist; and as he did not manage his affairs of this kind

carelessly, and as things of little moment, I think I ought to record a little further whatever was commendable in him in these points. He married a wife more noble than rich; being of opinion that the rich and the high-born are equally haughty and proud; but that those of noble blood would be more ashamed of base things, and consequently more obedient to their husbands in all that was fit and right. A man who beat his wife or child laid violent hands, he said, on what was most sacred; and a good husband he reckoned worthy of more praise than a great senator; and he admired the ancient Socrates for nothing so much as for having lived a temperate and contented life with a wife who was a scold, and children who were half-witted.

As soon as he had a son born, though he had never such urgent business upon his hands, unless it were some public matter, he would be by when his wife washed it and dressed it in its swaddling clothes. For she herself suckled it, nay, she often too gave her breast to her servants' children, to produce, by suckling the same milk, a kind of natural love in them to her son. When he began to come to years of discretion, Cato himself would teach him to read, although he had a servant, a very good grammarian, called Chilo, who taught many others; but he thought not fit, as he himself said, to have his son reprimanded by a slave, or pulled, it may be, by the

ears when found tardy in his lesson: nor would he have him owe to a servant the obligation of so great a thing as his learning; he himself, therefore (as we were saying), taught him his grammar, law, and his gymnastic exercises. Nor did he only show him, too, how to throw a dart, to fight in armour, and to ride, but to box also and to endure both heat and cold, and to swim over the most rapid and rough rivers. He says, likewise, that he wrote histories, in large characters, with his own hand, that so his son, without stirring out of the house might learn to know about his countrymen and forefathers; nor did he less abstain from speaking anything obscene before his son, than if it had been in the presence of the sacred virgins, called vestals. Nor would he ever go into the bath with him; which seems indeed to have been the common custom of the Romans. Sons-in-law used to avoid bathing with fathers-in-law, disliking to see one another naked; but having, in time, learned of the Greeks to strip before men, they have since taught the Greeks to do it even with the women themselves.

Thus, like an excellent work, Cato formed and fashioned his son to virtue; nor had he any occasion to find fault with his readiness and docility; but as he proved to be of too weak a constitution for hardships, he did not insist on requiring of him any very austere way of living. However, though delicate in health, he proved a stout man

in the field, and behaved himself valiantly when Paulus Æmilius fought against Perseus; where when his sword was struck from him by a blow, or rather slipped out of his hand by reason of its moistness, he so keenly resented it, that he turned to some of his friends about him, and taking them along with him again, fell upon the enemy; and having by a long fight and much force cleared the place, at length found it among great heaps of arms, and the dead bodies of friends as well as enemies piled one upon another. Upon which Paulus, his general, much commended the youth; and there is a letter of Cato's to his son, which highly praises his honourable eagerness for the recovery of his sword. Afterwards he married Tertia, Æmilius Paulus's daughter, and sister to Scipio; nor was he admitted into this family less for his own worth than his father's. So that Cato's care in his son's education came to a very fitting result.

He purchased a great many slaves out of the captives taken in war, but chiefly bought up the young ones, who were capable to be, as it were, broken and taught like whelps and colts. None of these ever entered another man's house, except sent either by Cato himself or his wife. If any one of them were asked what Cato did, they answered merely that they did not know. When a servant was at home, he was obliged either to do some work or sleep, for indeed Cato loved those

most who used to lie down often to sleep, accounting them more docile than those who were wakeful, and more fit for anything when they were refreshed with a little slumber. Being also of opinion that the great cause of the laziness and misbehaviour of slaves was their running after their pleasures, he fixed a certain price for them to pay for permission amongst themselves, but would suffer no connections out of the house. At first, when he was but a poor soldier, he would not be difficult in anything which related to his eating, but looked upon it as a pitiful thing to quarrel with a servant for the belly's sake; but afterwards, when he grew richer, and made any feasts for his friends and colleagues in office, as soon as supper was over he used to go with a leathern thong and scourge those who had waited or dressed the meat carelessly. He always contrived, too, that his servants should have some difference one among another, always suspecting and fearing a good understanding between them. Those who had committed anything worthy of death, he punished if they were found guilty by the verdict of their fellow-servants. But being after all much given to the desire of gain, he looked upon agriculture rather as a pleasure than profit; resolving, therefore, to lay out his money in safe and solid things, he purchased ponds, hot baths, grounds full of fuller's earth, remunerative lands, pastures, and woods; from all which

he drew large returns, nor could Jupiter himself, he used to say, do him much damage. He was also given to the form of usury, which is considered most odious, in traffic by sea; and that thus:— he desired that those whom he put out his money to should have many partners; when the number of them and their ships came to fifty, he himself took one share through Quintio his freedman, who therefore was to sail with the adventurers, and take a part in all their proceedings, so that thus there was no danger of losing his whole stock, but only a little part, and that with a prospect of great profit. He likewise lent money to those of his slaves who wished to borrow, with which they bought also other young ones, whom, when they had taught and bred up at his charges, they would sell again at the year's end; but some of them Cato would keep for himself, giving just as much for them as another had offered. To incline his son to be of his kind or temper, he used to tell him that it was not like a man, but rather like a widow woman, to lessen an estate. But the strongest indication of Cato's avaricious humour was when he took the boldness to affirm that he was a most wonderful, nay, a godlike man, who left more behind him than he had received.

He was now grown old, when Carneades the Academic, and Diogenes the Stoic, came as deputies from Athens to Rome, praying for release from a penalty of five hundred talents laid on

the Athenians, in a suit, to which they did not appear, in which the Oropians were plaintiffs and Sicyonians judges. All the most studious youths immediately waited on these philosophers, and frequently, with admiration, heard them speak. But the gracefulness of Carneades's oratory, whose ability was really greatest, and his reputation equal to it, gathered large and favourable audiences, and ere long filled, like a wind, all the city with the sound of it. So that it soon began to be told that a Greek, famous even to admiration, winning and carrying all before him, had impressed so strange a love upon the young men, that quitting all their pleasures and pastimes, they ran mad, as it were, after philosophy; which indeed much pleased the Romans in general; nor could they but with much pleasure see the youth receive so welcomely the Greek literature, and frequent the company of learned men. But Cato, on the other side, seeing the passion for words flowing into the city, from the beginning took it ill, fearing lest the youth should be diverted that way, and so should prefer the glory of speaking well before that of arms and doing well. And when the fame of the philosophers increased in the city, and Caius Acilius, a person of distinction, at his own request, became their interpreter to the senate at their first audience, Cato resolved, under some specious pretence, to have all philosophers cleared out of the city; and,

coming into the senate, blamed the magistrates for letting these deputies stay so long a time without being dispatched, though they were persons that could easily persuade the people to what they pleased; that therefore in all haste, something should be determined about their petition, that so they might go home again to their own schools, and declaim to the Greek children, and leave the Roman youth to be obedient, as hitherto, to their own laws and governors.

Yet he did this not out of any anger, as some think, to Carneades; but because he wholly despised philosophy, and out of a kind of pride scoffed at the Greek studies and literature; as, for example, he would say, that Socrates was a prating, seditious fellow, who did his best to tyrannize over his country, to undermine the ancient customs, and to entice and withdraw the citizens to opinions contrary to the laws. Ridiculing the school of Isocrates, he would add, that his scholars grew old men before they had done learning with him, as if they were to use their art and plead causes in the court of Minos in the next world. And to frighten his son from anything that was Greek, in a more vehement tone than became one of his age, he pronounced, as it were, with the voice of an oracle, that the Romans would certainly be destroyed when they began once to be infected with Greek literature; though time indeed has shown the vanity of this

his prophecy; as, in truth, the city of Rome has risen to its highest fortune while entertaining Grecian learning. Nor had he an aversion only against the Greek philosophers, but the physicians also; for having, it seems, heard how Hippocrates, when the king of Persia sent for him, with offers of a fee of several talents, said, that he would never assist barbarians who were enemies to the Greeks; he affirmed, that this was now become a common oath taken by all physicians, and enjoined his son to have a care and avoid them; for that he himself had written a little book of prescriptions for curing those who were sick in his family; he never enjoined fasting to any one, but ordered them either vegetables, or the meat of a duck, pigeon, or leveret; such kind of diet being of light digestion and fit for sick folks, only it made those who ate it dream a little too much; and by the use of this kind of physic, he said, he not only made himself and those about him well, but kept them so.

However, for this his presumption he seemed not to have escaped unpunished; for he lost both his wife and his son; though he himself, being of a strong, robust constitution, held out longer; so that he would often, even in his old days, address himself to women, and when he was past a lover's age, married a young woman, upon the following pretence: Having lost his own wife, he married his son to the daughter of Paulus Æmilius, who

was sister to Scipio; so that being now a widower himself, he had a young girl who came privately to visit him, but the house being very small, and a daughter-in-law also in it, this practice was quickly discovered; for the young woman seeming once to pass through it a little too boldly, the youth, his son, though he said nothing, seemed to look somewhat indignantly upon her. The old man perceiving and understanding that what he did was disliked, without finding any fault or saying a word, went away, as his custom was, with his usual companions to the market: and among the rest, he called aloud to one Salonius, who had been a clerk under him, and asked him whether he had married his daughter? He answered no, nor would he, till he had consulted him. Said Cato, "Then I have found out a fit son-in-law for you, if he should not displease by reason of his age; for in all other points there is no fault to be found in him; but he is indeed, as I said, extremely old." However, Salonius desired him to undertake the business, and to give the young girl to whom he pleased, she being a humble servant of his, who stood in need of his care and patronage. Upon this Cato, without any more ado, told him he desired to have the damsel himself. These words, as may well be imagined, at first astonished the man, conceiving that Cato was as far off from marrying, as he from a likelihood of being allied to the family of one who had

been consul and had triumphed; but perceiving him in earnest, he consented willingly; and going onwards to the forum, they quickly completed the bargain.

Whilst the marriage was in hand, Cato's son, taking some of his friends along with him, went and asked his father if it were for any offence he brought in a stepmother upon him? But Cato cried out, "Far from it, my son, I have no fault to find with you or anything of yours; only I desire to have many children, and to leave the commonwealth more such citizens as you are." Pisistratus, the tyrant of Athens, made, they say, this answer to his sons, when they were grown men, when he married his second wife, Timonassa of Argos, by whom he had it is said, Iophon and Thessalus. Cato had a son by this second wife, to whom, from his mother, he gave the surname of Salonius. In the meantime, his eldest died in his prætorship; of whom Cato often makes mention in his books, as having been a good man. He is said, however, to have borne the loss moderately and like a philosopher, and was nothing the more remiss in attending to affairs of state; so that he did not, as Lucius Lucullus and Metellus Pius did, grow languid in his old age, as though public business were a duty once to be discharged, and then quitted; nor did he, like Scipio Africanus, because envy had struck at his glory, turn from the public, and change and pass away the rest of

his life without doing anything; but as one persuaded Dionysius, that the most honourable tomb he could have would be to die in the exercise of his dominion; so Cato thought that old age to be the most honourable which was busied in public affairs; though he would, now and then, when he had leisure, recreate himself with husbandry and writing.

And, indeed, he composed various books and histories; and in his youth he addicted himself to agriculture for profit's sake; for he used to say he had but two ways of getting—agriculture and parsimony; and now, in his old age, the first of these gave him both occupation and a subject of study. He wrote one book on country matters, in which he treated particularly even of making cakes and preserving fruit; it being his ambition to be curious and singular in all things. His suppers, at his country-house, used also to be plentiful; he daily invited his friends and neighbours about him, and passed the time merrily with them; so that his company was not only agreeable to those of the same age, but even to younger men; for he had had experience in many things, and had been concerned in much, both by word and deed, that was worth the hearing. He looked upon a good table as the best place for making friends; where the commendations of brave and good citizens were usually introduced, and little said of base and unworthy ones; as Cato would

not give leave in his company to have anything, either good or ill, said about them.

Some will have the overthrow of Carthage to have been one of his last acts of state; when, indeed, Scipio the younger did by his valour give it the last blow, but the war, chiefly by the counsel and advice of Cato, was undertaken on the following occasion. Cato was sent to the Carthaginians and Masinissa, King of Numidia, who were at war with one another, to know the cause of their difference. He, it seems, had been a friend of the Romans from the beginning; and they, too, since they were conquered by Scipio, were of the Roman confederacy, having been shorn of their power by loss of territory and a heavy tax. Finding Carthage, not (as the Romans thought) low and in an ill condition, but well manned, full of riches and all sorts of arms and ammunition, and perceiving the Carthaginians carry it high, he conceived that it was not a time for the Romans to adjust affairs between them and Masinissa; but rather that they themselves would fall into danger, unless they should find means to check this rapid new growth of Rome's ancient irreconcilable enemy. Therefore, returning quickly to Rome, he acquainted the senate that the former defeats and blows given to the Carthaginians had not so much diminished their strength, as it had abated their imprudence and folly; that they were not become weaker, but

more experienced in war, and did only skirmish with the Numidians to exercise themselves the better to cope with the Romans: that the peace and league they had made was but a kind of suspension of war which awaited a fairer opportunity to break out again.

Moreover, they say that, shaking his gown, he took occasion to let drop some African figs before the senate. And on their admiring the size and beauty of them, he presently added, that the place that bore them was but three days' sail from Rome. Nay, he never after this gave his opinion, but at the end he would be sure to come out with this sentence, "ALSO, CARTHAGE, METHINKS, OUGHT UTTERLY TO BE DESTROYED." But Publius Scipio Nasica would always declare his opinion to the contrary, in these words, "It seems requisite to me that Carthage should still stand." For seeing his countrymen to be grown wanton and insolent, and the people made, by their prosperity, obstinate and disobedient to the senate, and drawing the whole city, whither they would, after them, he would have had the fear of Carthage to serve as a bit to hold the contumacy of the multitude; and he looked upon the Carthaginians as too weak to overcome the Romans, and too great to be despised by them. On the other side, it seemed a perilous thing to Cato that a city which had been always great, and was now grown sober and wise, by reason of its former calamities, should

still lie, as it were, in wait for the follies and dangerous excesses of the over-powerful Roman people; so that he thought it the wisest course to have all outward dangers removed, when they had so many inward ones among themselves.

Thus Cato, they say, stirred up the third and last war against the Carthaginians: but no sooner was the said war begun, than he died, prophesying of the person that should put an end to it who was then only a young man; but, being tribune in the army, he in several fights gave proof of his courage and conduct. The news of which being brought to Cato's ears at Rome, he thus expressed himself:—

"The only wise man of them all is he,
The others e'en as shadows flit and flee."

This prophecy Scipio soon confirmed by his actions.

Cato left no posterity, except one son by his second wife, who was named, as we said, Cato Salonius; and a grandson by his eldest son, who died. Cato Salonius died when he was prætor, but his son Marcus was afterwards consul, and he was grandfather of Cato the philosopher, who for virtue and renown was one of the most eminent personages of his time.

PLUTARCH.

THOMAS HOOD

I HAVE been reading the "Memorials of Hood" by his children,* and wonder whether the book will have the same interest for others and for younger people, as for persons of my own age and calling. Books of travel to any country become interesting to us who have been there. Men revisit the old school, though hateful to them, with ever so much kindliness and sentimental affection. There was the tree under which the bully licked you: here the ground where you had to fag out on holidays, and so forth. In a word, my dear sir, *You* are the most interesting subject to yourself, of any that can occupy your worship's thoughts. I have no doubt, a Crimean soldier, reading a history of that siege, and how Jones and the gallant 99th were ordered to charge or what not, thinks, "Ah, yes, we of the 100th were placed so and so, I perfectly remember." So with this memorial of poor Hood, it may have, no doubt, a greater interest for me than for others, for I was fighting, so to speak, in a different part of the field, and engaged, a young subaltern, in the Battle of Life, in which Hood

* *Memorials of Thomas Hood.* Moxon, 1860. 2 vols.

fell, young still, and covered with glory. "The Bridge of Sighs" was his Corunna, his heights of Abraham—sickly, weak, wounded, he fell in the full blaze and fame of that great victory.

What manner of man was the genius who penned that famous song? What like was Wolfe, who climbed and conquered on those famous heights of Abraham? We all want to know details regarding men who have achieved famous feats, whether of war, or wit, or eloquence, or endurance, or knowledge. His one or two happy and heroic actions take a man's name and memory out of the crowd of names and memories. Henceforth he stands eminent. We scan him: we want to know all about him; we walk round and examine him, are curious, perhaps, and think are we not as strong and tall and capable as yonder champion; were we not bred as well, and could we not endure the winter s cold as well as he? Or we look up with all our eyes of admiration; will find no fault in our hero: declare his beauty and proportions perfect; his critics envious detractors, and so forth. Yesterday, before he performed his feat, he was nobody. Who cared about his birthplace, his parentage, or the colour of his hair? To-day, by some single achievement, or by a series of great actions to which his genius accustoms us, he is famous, and antiquarians are busy finding out under what schoolmaster's ferule he was educated, where his grandmother was vacci-

nated, and so forth. If half-a-dozen washing-bills of Goldsmith's were to be found to-morrow, would they not inspire a general interest, and be printed in a hundred papers? I lighted upon Oliver, not very long since, in an old Town and Country Magazine, at the Pantheon masquerade "in an old English habit." Straightway my imagination ran out to meet him, to look at him, to follow him about. I forgot the names of scores of fine gentlemen of the past age, who were mentioned besides. We want to see this man who has amused and charmed us: who has been our friend, and given us hours of pleasant companionship and kindly thought. I protest when I came, in the midst of those names of people of fashion, and beaux, and demireps, upon those names *"Sir J. R-yn-lds, in a domino; Mr. Cr-d-ck and Dr. G-ldsm-th, in two old English dresses,"* I had, so to speak, my heart in my mouth. What, *you* here, my dear Sir Joshua? Ah, what an honour and privilege it is to see you! This is Mr. Goldsmith? And very much, sir, the ruff and the slashed doublet become you! O Doctor! what a pleasure I had and have in reading the *Animated Nature!* How *did* you learn the secret of writing the decasyllable line, and whence that sweet wailing note of tenderness that accompanies your song? Was Beau Tibbs a real man, and will you do me the honour of allowing me to sit at your table at supper? Don't you think you know how he would

have talked? Would you not have liked to hear him prattle over the champagne?

Now, Hood is passed away—passed off the earth as much as Goldsmith or Horace. The times in which he lived, and in which very many of us lived and were young, are changing or changed. I saw Hood once as a young man, at a dinner which seems almost as ghostly now as that masquerade at the Pantheon (1772), of which we were speaking anon. It was at a dinner of the Literary Fund, in that vast apartment which is hung around with the portraits of very large Royal Freemasons, now unsubstantial ghosts. There at the end of the room was Hood. Some publishers, I think, were our companions. I quite remember his pale face; he was thin and deaf, and very silent; he scarcely opened his lips during the dinner, and he made one pun. Some gentleman missed his snuff-box, and Hood said,—(the Freemasons' Tavern was kept, you must remember, by Mr. CUFF in those days, not by its present proprietors). Well, the box being lost, and asked for, and CUFF (remember that name) being the name of the landlord, Hood opened his silent jaws and said * * * * * Shall I tell you what he said? It was not a very good pun, which the great punster then made. Choose your favourite pun out of "Whims and Oddities," and fancy that was the joke which he contributed to the hilarity of our little table.

Where those asterisks are drawn on the page, you must know, a pause occurred, during which I was engaged with "Hood's Own," having been referred to the book by this life of the author which I have just been reading. I am not going to dissert on Hood's humour; I am not a fair judge. Have I not said elsewhere that there are one or two wonderfully old gentlemen still alive who used to give me tips when I was a boy? I can be a fair critic about them. I always think of that sovereign, that rapture of raspberry-tarts, which made my young days happy. Those old sovereign-contributors may tell stories ever so old, and I shall laugh; they may commit murder, and I shall believe it was justifiable homicide. There is my friend Baggs, who goes about abusing me, and of course our dear mutual friends tell me. Abuse away, *mon bon!* You were so kind to me when I wanted kindness, that you may take the change out of that gold now, and say I am a cannibal and negro, if you will. Ha, Baggs! Dost thou wince as thou readest this line? Does guilty conscience throbbing at thy breast tell thee of whom the fable is narrated? Puff out thy wrath, and, when it has ceased to blow, my Baggs shall be to me as the Baggs of old—the generous, the gentle, the friendly.

No, on second thoughts, I am determined I will not repeat that joke which I heard Hood make. He says he wrote these jokes with such

ease that he sent manuscripts to the publishers faster than they could acknowledge the receipt thereof. I won't say that they were all good jokes, or that to read a great book full of them is a work at present altogether jocular. Writing to a friend respecting some memoir of him which had been published, Hood says, "You will judge how well the author knows me, when he says my mind is rather serious than comic." At the time when he wrote these words, he evidently undervalued his own serious power, and thought that in punning and broad-grinning lay his chief strength. Is not there something touching in that simplicity and humility of faith? "To make laugh is my calling," says he; "I must jump, I must grin, I must tumble, I must turn language head over heels, and leap through grammar"; and he goes to his work humbly and courageously, and what he has to do that does he with all his might, through sickness, through sorrow, through exile, poverty, fever, depression—there he is, always ready to his work, and with a jewel of genius in his pocket. Why, when he laid down his puns and pranks, put the motley off, and spoke out of his heart, all England and America listened with tears and wonder! Other men have delusions of conceit, and fancy themselves greater than they are, and that the world slights them. Have we not heard how Liston always thought he ought to play Hamlet? Here is a man with a power to touch

the heart almost unequalled, and he passes days and years in writing, "Young Ben he was a nice young man," and so forth. To say truth, I have been reading in a book of "Hood's Own" until I am perfectly angry. "You great man, you good man, you true genius and poet," I cry out, as I turn page after page. "Do, do, make no more of these jokes, but be yourself, and take your station."

When Hood was on his deathbed, Sir Robert Peel, who only knew of his illness, not of his imminent danger, wrote to him a noble and touching letter, announcing that a pension was conferred on him:

"I am more than repaid," writes Peel, "by the personal satisfaction which I have had in doing that for which you return me warm and characteristic acknowledgments.

"You perhaps think that you are known to one with such multifarious occupations as myself, merely by general reputation as an author; but I assure you that there can be little, which you have written and acknowledged, which I have not read; and that there are few who can appreciate and admire more than myself, the good sense and good feeling which have taught you to infuse so much fun and merriment into writings correcting folly and exposing absurdities, and yet never trespassing beyond those limits within which wit and facetiousness are not very often confined. You

may write on with the consciousness of independence, as free and unfettered, as if no communication had ever passed between us. I am not conferring a private obligation upon you, but am fulfilling the intentions of the legislature, which has placed at the disposal of the Crown a certain sum (miserable, indeed, in amount) to be applied to the recognition of public claims on the bounty of the Crown. If you will review the names of those whose claims have been admitted on account of their literary or scientific eminence, you will find an ample confirmation of the truth of my statement.

"One return, indeed, I shall ask of you,—that you will give me the opportunity of making your personal acquaintance."

And Hood, writing to a friend, enclosing a copy of Peel's letter, says, "Sir R. Peel came from Burleigh on Tuesday night, and went down to Brighton on Saturday. If he had written by post, I should not have had it till to-day. So he sent his servant with the enclosed on *Saturday night;* another mark of considerate attention." He is frightfully unwell, he continues: his wife says he looks *quite green;* but ill as he is, poor fellow, "his well is not dry. He has pumped out a sheet of Christmas fun, is drawing some cuts, and shall write a sheet more of his novel."

Oh, sad, marvellous picture of courage, of honesty, of patient endurance, of duty struggling

against pain! How noble Peel's figure is standing by that sick bed! how generous his words, how dignified and sincere his compassion! And the poor dying man, with a heart full of natural gratitude towards his noble benefactor, must turn to him and say—"If it be well to be remembered by a Minister, it is better still not to be forgotten by him in a 'hurly Burleigh!'" Can you laugh? Is not the joke horribly pathetic from the poor dying lips? As dying Robin Hood must fire a last shot with his bow—as one reads of Catholics on their death-beds putting on a Capuchin dress to go out of the world—here is poor Hood at his last hour putting on his ghastly motley, and uttering one joke more.

He dies, however, in dearest love and peace with his children, wife, friends; to the former especially his whole life had been devoted, and every day showed his fidelity, simplicity, and affection. In going through the record of his most pure, modest, honourable life, and living along with him, you come to trust him thoroughly, and feel that here is a most loyal, affectionate, and upright soul, with whom you have been brought into communion. Can we say as much of the lives of all men of letters? Here is one at least without guile, without pretension, without scheming, of a pure life, to his family and a little modest circle of friends tenderly devoted.

And what a hard work, and what a slender reward! In the little domestic details with which the book abounds, what a simple life is shown to us! The most simple little pleasures and amusements delight and occupy him. You have revels on shrimps; the good wife making the pie; details about the maid, and criticisms on her conduct; wonderful tricks played with the plum-pudding—all the pleasures centring round the little humble home. One of the first men of his time, he is appointed editor of a Magazine at a salary of 300*l.* per annum, signs himself exultingly "Ed. N. M. M.," and the family rejoice over the income as over a fortune. He goes to a Greenwich dinner—what a feast and a rejoicing afterwards!—

"Well, we drank 'the Boz' with a delectable clatter, which drew from him a good warm-hearted speech. . . . He looked very well, and had a younger brother along with him. . . . Then we had songs. Barham chanted a Robin Hood ballad, and Cruikshank sang a burlesque ballad of Lord H——; and somebody, unknown to me, gave a capital imitation of a French showman. Then we toasted Mrs. Boz, and the Chairman, and Vice, and the Traditional Priest sang the 'Deep deep sea,' in his deep deep voice; and then we drank to Proctor, who wrote the said song; also Sir J. Wilson's good health, and Cruikshank's, and Ainsworth's: and a Manches-

ter friend of the latter sang a Manchester ditty, so full of trading stuff, that it really seemed to have been not composed, but manufactured. Jerdan, as Jerdanish as usual on such occasions—you know how paradoxically he is *quite at home* in *dining out*. As to myself, I had to make my *second maiden speech,* for Mr. Monckton Milnes proposed my health in terms my modesty might allow me to repeat to *you,* but my memory won't. However, I ascribed the toast to my notoriously bad health, and assured them that their wishes had already improved it—that I felt a brisker circulation—a more genial warmth about the heart, and explained that a certain trembling of my hand was not from palsy, or my old ague, but an inclination in my hand to shake itself with every one present. Whereupon I had to go through the friendly ceremony with as many of the company as were within reach, besides a few more who came express from the other end of the table. *Very* gratifying, wasn't it? Though I cannot go quite so far as Jane, who wants me to have that hand chopped off, bottled, and preserved in spirits. She was sitting up for me, very anxiously, as usual when I go out, because I am so domestic and steady, and was down at the door before I could ring at the gate, to which Boz kindly sent me in his own carriage. Poor girl! what *would* she do if she had a wild husband instead of a tame one?"

And the poor anxious wife is sitting up, and fondles the hand which has been shaken by so

many illustrious men! The little feast dates back only eighteen years, and yet somehow it seems as distant as a dinner at Mr. Thrale's, or a meeting at Will's.

Poor little gleam of sunshine! very little good cheer enlivens that sad simple life. We have the triumph of the Magazine: then a new Magazine projected and produced: then illness and the last scene, and the kind Peel by the dying man's bedside speaking noble words of respect and sympathy, and soothing the last throbs of the tender honest heart.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

LORD MACAULAY

FEBRUARY 6, 1832: Dined yesterday with Lord Holland; came very late, and found a vacant place between Sir George Robinson and a common-looking man in black. As soon as I had time to look at my neighbour, I began to speculate (as one usually does) as to who he might be, and as he did not for some time open his lips except to eat, I settled that he was some obscure man of letters or of medicine, perhaps a cholera doctor. In a short time the conversation turned upon early and late education, and Lord Holland said he had always remarked that self-educated men were peculiarly conceited and arrogant, and apt to look down upon the generality of mankind, from their being ignorant of how much other people knew; not having been at public schools, they are uninformed of the course of general education. My neighbour observed that he thought the most remarkable example of self-education was that of Alfieri, who had reached the age of thirty without having acquired any accomplishment save that of driving, and who was so ignorant of his own lan-

guage that he had to learn it like a child, beginning with elementary books. Lord Holland quoted Julius Cæsar and Scaliger as examples of late education, said that the latter had been wounded and that he had been married and commenced learning Greek the same day, when my neighbour remarked "that he supposed his learning Greek was not an instantaneous act like his marriage." This remark, and the manner of it, gave me the notion that he was a dull fellow, for it came out in a way which bordered on the ridiculous, so as to excite something like a sneer. I was a little surprised to hear him continue the thread of conversation (from Scaliger's wound) and talk of Loyola having been wounded at Pampeluna. I wondered how he happened to know anything about Loyola's wound. Having thus settled my opinion, I went on eating my dinner, when Auckland, who was sitting opposite to me, addressed my neighbour, "Mr. Macaulay, will you drink a glass of wine?" I thought I should have dropped off my chair. It was MACAULAY, the man I had been so long most curious to see and to hear, whose genius, eloquence, astonishing knowledge, and diversified talents have excited my wonder and admiration for such a length of time, and here I had been sitting next to him, hearing him talk, and setting him down for a dull fellow. I felt as if he could have read my thoughts, and the per-

spiration burst from every pore of my face, and yet it was impossible not to be amused at the idea. It was not till Macaulay stood up that I was aware of all the vulgarity and ungainliness of his appearance; not a ray of intellect beams from his countenance; a lump of more ordinary clay never enclosed a powerful mind and lively imagination. He had a cold and sore throat, the latter of which occasioned a constant contraction of the muscles of the thorax, making him appear as if in momentary danger of a fit. His manner struck me as not pleasing, but it was not assuming, unembarrassed, yet not easy, unpolished, yet not coarse; there was no kind of usurpation of the conversation, no tenacity as to opinion or facts, no assumption of superiority, but the variety and extent of his information were soon apparent, for whatever subject was touched upon he evinced the utmost familiarity with it; quotation, illustration, anecdote, seemed ready in his hands for every topic. Primogeniture in this country, in others, and particularly in ancient Rome was the principal topic, I think, but Macaulay was not certain what was the law of Rome, except that when a man died intestate his estate was divided between his children. After dinner Talleyrand and Madame de Dino came in. He was introduced to Talleyrand, who told him that he meant to go to the House of Commons on Tuesday, and

that he hoped he would speak, *"qu'il avait entendu tous les grands orateurs, et il désirait à présent entendre Monsieur Macaulay."*

London, September 27, 1835: . . . I have heard of Southey, who would read a book through as he stood in a bookseller's shop; that is, his eye would glance down the page, and by a process partly mechanical, partly intellectual, formed by long habit, he would extract in his synoptical passage all that he required to know. (Macaulay was, and George Lewis is, just as wonderful in this respect.)

February 9, 1836: I was talking yesterday with Stephen about Brougham and Macaulay. He said he had known Brougham about thirty years, and well remembers walking with him down to Clapham, to dine with Zachary Macaulay, and telling him he would find a prodigy of a boy there of whom he must take notice. This was Tom Macaulay. Brougham afterward put himself forward as the monitor and director of the education of Macaulay, and I remember hearing of a letter he wrote to the father on the subject, which made a great noise at the time; but he was like the man who brought up a young lion, which finished by biting his head off. Brougham and Macaulay disliked each other. Brougham could not forgive his great superiority in many of those accomplishments in which he thought himself unrivalled; and being at no pains

to disguise his jealousy and dislike, the other was not behind him in corresponding feelings of aversion. It was unworthy of both, but most of Brougham, who was the aggressor, and who might have considered the world large enough for both of them, and that a sufficiency of fame was attainable by each. Stephen said that if ever Macaulay's life was written by a competent biographer it would appear that he had displayed feats of memory which he believed to be unequalled by any human being. He can repeat all Demosthenes by heart, and all Milton, a great part of the Bible, both in English and (the New Testament) in Greek; besides this his memory retains passages innumerable of every description of books, which in discussion he pours forth with incredible facility. He is passionately fond of Greek literature; has not much taste for Latin or French. Old Mill (one of the best Greek scholars of the day) thinks Macaulay has a more extensive and accurate acquaintance with the Greek writers than any man living, and there is no Greek book of any note which he has not read over and over again. In the Bible he takes great delight, and there are few better Biblical scholars. In law he made no proficiency, and mathematics he abominates; but his great forte is history, especially English history. Here his superhuman memory, which appears to have the faculty of digesting and arranging as well

as of retaining, has converted his mind into a mighty magazine of knowledge, from which, with the precision and correctness of a kind of intellectual machine, he pours forth stores of learning, information, precept, example, anecdote, and illustration with a familiarity and facility not less astonishing than delightful. He writes as if he had lived in the times and among the people whose actions and characters he records and delineates. A little reading, too, is enough for Macaulay, for by some process impossible to other men he contrives to transfer as it were, by an impression rapid and indelible, the contents of the books he reads to his own mind, where they are deposited, always accessible, and never either forgotten or confused. Far superior to Brougham in general knowledge, in fancy, imagination, and in the art of composition, he is greatly inferior to him in those qualities which raise men to social and political eminence. Brougham, tall, thin, and commanding in figure, with a face which, however ugly, is full of expression, and a voice of great power, variety, and even melody, notwithstanding his occasional prolixity and tediousness, is an orator in every sense of the word. Macaulay, short, fat, and ungraceful, with a round, thick, unmeaning face, and with rather a lisp, though he has made speeches of great merit, and of a very high style of eloquence in point of com-

position, has no pretensions to be put in competition with Brougham in the House of Commons. Nor is the difference and the inferiority of Macaulay less marked in society. Macaulay, indeed, is a great talker, and pours forth floods of knowledge on all subjects; but the gracefulness, lightness, and variety are wanting in his talk which are so conspicuous in his writings; there is not enough of alloy in the metal of his conversation; it is too didactic, it is all too good, and not sufficiently flexible, plastic, and diversified for general society. Brougham, on the other hand, is all life, spirit, and gaiety—"from grave to gay, from lively to severe."

February 9, 1836: . . . *Quantum mutatus!* All this has long ceased to be true of Brougham. Macaulay, without having either the wit or the *charm* which constitutes the highest kind of colloquial excellence or success, is a marvellous, and unrivalled (in his way), and a delightful talker.

August 12, 1832: . . . Dined yesterday at Holland House; the Chancellor, Lord Grey, Luttrell, Palmerston, and Macaulay. The Chancellor [Brougham] was sleepy and would not talk; he uttered nothing but yawns and grunts. Macaulay and Allen disputed history, particularly the character of Emperor Frederick II, and Allen declared himself a Guelf and Macaulay a Ghibelline. Macaulay is a most extraordinary man, and his astonishing knowledge is every

moment exhibited, but (as far as I have yet seen of him, which is not sufficient to judge) he is not *agreeable*. His propositions and his allusions are rather too abrupt; he starts topics not altogether naturally; then he has none of the graces of conversation, none of that exquisite tact and refinement which are the result of a felicitous intuition or a long acquaintance with good society, or more probably a mixture of both. The mighty mass of his knowledge is not animated by that subtle spirit of taste and discretion which alone can give it the qualities of lightness and elasticity, and without which, though he may have the power of instructing and astonishing, he never will attain that of delighting and captivating his hearers. The dinner was agreeable, and enlivened by a squabble between Lady Holland and Allen, at which we were all ready to die of laughing. He jeered at something she said as brutal and chuckled at his own wit.

London, November 13, 1833: . . . On Sunday dined with Rogers, Moore, Sydney Smith, Macaulay. Sydney less vivacious than usual, and somewhat overpowered and talked down by what Moore called the *"flumen sermonis"* of Macaulay. Sydney calls Macaulay "a book in breeches." . . . I believe we would all of us have been glad to exchange some of his sense for some of Sydney Smith's nonsense. He told me that he had read Sir Charles Grandison fifteen times!

August 8, 1838: James Stephen yesterday was talking to me about Macaulay. He came to him soon after his return from India, and told him that when there he used to get up at five every morning (as everybody else did), and till nine or ten he read Greek and Latin, and went through the whole range of classical literature of every sort and kind; that one day in the Government library he had met with the works of Chrysostom, fourteen Greek folios, and that he had taken home first one volume and then another, till he had read the whole through, that is, he had not read every word, because he had found that it contained a great deal of stuff not worth reading, but he had carefully looked at every page, and had actually read the greater part. His object now is to devote himself to literature, and his present project, to write a History of England for the last 150 years, in which Stephen says he would give scope to his fine imagination in the delineation of character, and bring his vast stores of knowledge to the composition of the narrative, and would, without doubt, produce a work of astonishing power and interest. Macaulay says that if he had the power of recalling everything he has ever written and published and of destroying it all, he would do so, for he thinks that his time has been thrown away upon *opuscula* unworthy of his talents. This is, however, a very preposterous squeamish-

ness and piece of pride or humility, whichever it may be called, for no man need be ashamed of producing anything perfect in its kind, however the kind may not be the highest, and his reviews are perfect in their way. I asked Stephen by what mental process Macaulay had contrived to accumulate such boundless stores of information, and how it was all so sorted and arranged in his head that it was always producible at will. He said that he had first of all the power of abstraction, of giving his undivided attention to the book and the subject on which he was occupied; then, as other men read by syllables or by words, he had the faculty, acquired by use, of reading by whole sentences, or swallowing, as it were, whole paragraphs at once, and thus he infinitely abbreviated the mere mechanical part of study; that as an educated man would read any number of pages much more quickly than an uneducated man, so much more quickly would Macaulay read than any ordinary man. . . .

. . . There is no more comparison between his brain and such a one as mine than between a hurdy-gurdy in the street and the great organ at Haarlem.

January 21, 1841: . . . What Henry Taylor said of him is epigrammatic and true, "that his memory has swamped his mind"; and though I do not think, as some people say, that his own

opinions are completely suppressed by the load of his learning so that you know nothing of his mind, it appears to me true that there is less of originality in him, less exhibition of his own character, than there probably would be if he was less abundantly stored with the riches of the minds of others. We had yesterday a party well composed for talk, for there were listeners of intelligence and a good specimen of the sort of society of this house—Macaulay, Melbourne, Morpeth, Duncannon, Baron Rolfe, Allen and Lady Holland, and John Russell came in the evening. I wish that a shorthand writer could have been there to take down all the conversation or that I could have carried it away in my head; because it was curious in itself, and curiously illustrative of the characters of the performers. Before dinner some mention was made of the portraits of the Speakers in the Speaker's House, and I asked how far they went back. Macaulay said he was not sure, but certainly as far as Sir Thomas More. "Sir Thomas More," said Lady Holland. "I did not know he had been Speaker." "Oh, yes," said Macaulay, "don't you remember when Cardinal Wolsey came down to the House of Commons and More was in the chair?" And then he told the whole of that well-known transaction, and all More had said. At dinner, amongst a variety of persons and subjects, principally ecclesiastical,

which were discussed—for Melbourne loves all sorts of theological talk—we got upon India and Indian men of eminence, proceeding from Gleig's *Life of Warren Hastings,* which Macaulay said was the worst book that ever was written; and then the name of Sir Thomas Munro came uppermost. Lady Holland did not know why Sir Thomas Munro was so distinguished; when Macaulay explained all that he had ever said, done, written, or thought, and vindicated his claim to the title of a great man, till Lady Holland got bored with Sir Thomas, told Macaulay she had had enough of him, and would have no more. This would have dashed and silenced an ordinary talker, but to Macaulay it was no more than replacing a book on its shelf, and he was as ready as ever to open on any other topic. It would be impossible to follow and describe the various mazes of conversation, all of which he threaded with an ease that was always astonishing and instructive, and generally interesting and amusing. When we went upstairs we got upon the Fathers of the Church. Allen asked Macaulay if he had read much of the Fathers. He said, not a great deal. He had read Chrysostom when he was in India; that is, he had turned over the leaves and for a few months had read him for two or three hours every morning before breakfast; and he had read some of Athanasius. "I remember a sermon," he said, "of

Chrysostom's in praise of the Bishop of Antioch"; and then he proceeded to give us the substance of this sermon till Lady Holland got tired of the Fathers, again put her extinguisher on Chrysostom as she had done on Munro, and with a sort of derision, and as if to have the pleasure of puzzling Macaulay, she turned to him and said, "Pray, Macaulay, what was the origin of a *doll?* when were dolls first mentioned in history?" Macaulay was, however, just as much up to the dolls as he was to the Fathers, and instantly replied that the Roman children had their dolls, which they offered up to Venus when they grew older; and quoted Persius for

Veneri donatæ a virgine puppæ,

and I have not the least doubt, if he had been allowed to proceed, he would have told us who was the Chenevix of ancient Rome, and the name of the first baby that ever handled a doll.

The conversation then ran upon Milman's *History of Christianity,* which Melbourne praised, the religious opinions of Locke, of Milman himself, the opinion of the world thereupon, and so on to Strauss's book and his mythical system, and what he meant by mythical. Macaulay began illustrating and explaining the meaning of a *myth* by examples from remote antiquity, when I observed that in order to explain the

meaning of "mythical" it was not necessary to go so far back; that, for instance, we might take the case of Wm. Huntington, S. S.: that the account of his life was historical, but the story of his praying to God for a new pair of leather breeches and finding them under a hedge was mythical. Now, I had just a general superficial recollection of this story in Huntington's *Life,* but my farthing rush-light was instantly extinguished by the blaze of Macaulay's all-grasping and all-retaining memory, for he at once came in with the whole minute account of this transaction: how Huntington had prayed, what he had found, and where, and all he had said to the tailor by whom this miraculous nether garment was made.

November 27, 1841: On Thursday I dined with Milman, to meet Macaulay, Sydney Smith, and Baggage. Pretty equal partition of talk between Sydney and Macaulay. The latter has been employing his busy mind in gathering all the ballads he can pick up, buying strings of them in the streets, and he gave us an amusing account of the character of this species of literature, repeating lines and stanzas without end. The ballad writers, who may be supposed to represent the opinions and feelings of the masses for whose delectation they compose, do not, according to Macaulay, exhibit very high moral sentiments, as they evince a great partiality for criminals,

and are the strenuous opposers of humanity to animals.

December 23, 1841: . . . Another night, More sang some of his own Melodies, and Macaulay has been always talking. Never certainly was anything heard like him. . . . The drollest thing is to see the effect upon Rogers, who is nearly extinguished, and can neither make himself heard, nor find an interval to get in a word. He is exceedingly provoked, though he can't help admiring, and he will revive to-morrow when Macaulay goes. . . . We walked together for a long time the day before yesterday, when he talked of the History he is writing. I asked him if he was still collecting materials, or had begun to write. He said he was writing while collecting, going on upon the fund of his already acquired knowledge, and he added, that it was very mortifying to find how much there was of which he was wholly ignorant. I said if he felt that, with his superhuman memory and wonderful scope of knowledge, what must ordinary men feel? He said that it was a mistake to impute to him either such a memory or so much knowledge; that Whewell [Master of Trinity College, Cambridge] and Brougham had more universal knowledge than he had, but that what he did possess was the ready, perhaps too ready, use of all he knew. I said what surprised me most was, his having had time to read certain

books over and over again; e. g., he said he had read *Don Quixote* in Spanish, five or six times; and I am afraid to say how often he told me he had read *Clarissa.* He said that he read no modern books, none of the novels or travels that come out day after day. He had read *Tom Jones* repeatedly, but *Cecil a Peer* not at all; and as to *Clarissa,* he had read it so often that, if the work were lost, he could give a very tolerable idea of it, could narrate the story completely, and many of the most remarkable passages and expressions.

December 26, 1842: Macaulay went away the day before Christmas Day, and it was wonderful how quiet the house seemed after he was gone, and it was not less agreeable. Rogers was all alive again, Austin and Dundas talked much more than they would have done, and Lord Lansdowne too, and on the whole we were as well without him.

February 19, 1842: . . . I went on Wednesday with Lord and Lady John, Charles Howard and Macaulay, to the Battersea schools, Robert Eden's and Dr. Kay's. We put forward Macaulay to examine the boys in history and geography, and Lord John asked them a few questions, and I still fewer. They answered in a way that would have put to shame most of the fine people's children. . . . There is one striking contrast between the boys at Eden's school, and the aristo-

cratic schoolboys: while the latter consider learning as an irksome employment, going to school an event full of misery and woe, and never think of anything but how to shirk their lessons, and find time for play and idleness, the poor boys rejoice in their school, love the instruction they receive, and no punishment is so great to them as exclusion from the schoolroom.

October 29, 1842: . . . Macaulay's book, which he calls *Lays of Ancient Rome,* came out yesterday, and admirable his ballads are. They were composed in India and on the voyage home. He showed them to Dr. Arnold, who advised him to publish them, but probably while he was in office he had no time to think about them, and the publication is the result of his leisure. He has long been addicted to ballad-writing, for there is one in the American edition of his works, and there is a much longer one written when he was at Cambridge (or soon after), upon the League, and one of Henry IV's battles, which is very good indeed. He is a wonderful fellow altogether.

CHARLES CAVENDISH FULKE GREVILLE.

SOME OF DR. JOHNSON'S FRIENDS

JAMES BOSWELL

MR. THOMAS DAVIES the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden,* told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him: but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with

* No. 8.—The very place where I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the illustrious subject of this work, deserves to be particularly marked. I never pass by it without feeling reverence and regret.

any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; * and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting,

* Mr. Murphy in his "Essay on the Life and Genius of Dr. Johnson," has given an account of this meeting considerably different from mine, I am persuaded without any consciousness of errour. His memory, at the end of near thirty years, has undoubtedly deceived him, and he supposes himself to have been present at a scene, which he has probably heard inaccurately described by others. In my note *taken on the very day*, in which I am confident I marked every thing material that passed, no mention is made of this gentleman; and I am sure, that I should not have omitted one so well known in the literary world. It may easily be imagined that this my first interview with Dr. Johnson, with all its circumstances, made a strong impression on my mind, and would be registered with peculiar attention.

[It is remarkable, that in the editions of Murphy's Life of Johnson, published subsequently to the appearance of this note, in 1791, he never corrected the misstatement here mentioned.—M.]

advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." —"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what

a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil.* I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think, that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance

*That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, "It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it." JOHNSON, (smiling) "Why, Sir, that is true."

was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

"People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an authour is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.

"In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do everything for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind."

"Sir, this book ('The Elements of Criticism,' which he had taken up,) is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical."

Speaking of one who with more than ordinary

boldness attacked publick measures and the royal family, he said, "I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked."

"The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tedium vitæ*. When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country,* he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling."

"Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory. Ridicule has gone down before him, and I doubt, Derrick is his enemy.*

"Derrick may do very well, as long as he can outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over."

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, "Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from."

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that

* Mr. Sheridan was then reading lectures upon Oratory at Bath, where Derrick was Master of the Ceremonies; or, as the phrase is, KING.

though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

The circle of his friends, indeed, at this time was extensive and various, far beyond what has been generally imagined. To trace his acquaintance with each particular person, if it could be done, would be a task, of which the labour would not be repaid by the advantage. But exceptions are to be made; one of which must be a friend so eminent as Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was truly his *dulce decus,* and with whom he maintained an uninterrupted intimacy to the last hour of his life. When Johnson lived in Castle-street, Cavendish-square, he used frequently to visit two ladies who lived opposite to him, Miss Cotterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell. Reynolds used also to visit there, and thus they met. Mr. Reynolds, as I have observed above, had, from the first reading of his Life of Savage, conceived a very high admiration of Johnson's powers of writing. His conversation no less de-

lighted him; and he cultivated his acquaintance with the laudable zeal of one who was ambitious of general improvement. Sir Joshua, indeed, was lucky enough at their very first meeting to make a remark, which was so much above the common-place style of conversation, that Johnson at once perceived that Reynolds had the habit of thinking for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations; upon which Reynolds observed, "You have however, the comfort of being relieved from a burthen of gratitude." They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion, as too selfish; but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the *mind,* the fair view of human nature,* which is exhibited, like some of the reflections of Rochefaucault. The consequence was, that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him.

BENNET LANGTON AND TOPHAM BEAUCLERK

His acquaintance with Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in Lincolnshire, another much

* [Johnson himself has a sentiment somewhat similar in his 87th Rambler: "There are minds so impatient of inferiority, that their gratitude is a species of revenge, and they return benefits, not because recompense is a pleasure, but because obligation is a pain."—J. BOSWELL.]

valued friend, commenced soon after the conclusion of his Rambler; which that gentleman, then a youth, had read with so much admiration, that he came to London chiefly with a view of endeavouring to be introduced to its author. By a fortunate chance he happened to take lodgings in a house where Mr. Levet frequently visited; and having mentioned his wish to his landlady, she introduced him to Mr. Levet, who readily obtained Johnson's permission to bring Mr. Langton to him; as, indeed, Johnson, during the whole course of his life, had no shyness, real or affected, but was easy of access to all who were properly recommended, and even wished to see numbers at his *levee,* as his morning circle of company might, with strict propriety, be called. Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprised when the sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress, or manner. From perusing his writings, he fancied he should see a decent, well-drest, in short, a remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bed-chamber, about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge, uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible, and his religious and political notions so congenial with those in which Langton had been educated, that he conceived for him that vener-

ation and attachment which he ever preserved. Johnson was not the less ready to love Mr. Langton, for his being of a very ancient family; for I have heard him say, with pleasure, "Langton, Sir, has a grant of free warren from Henry the Second; and Cardinal Stephen Langton, in King John's reign, was of this family."

Mr. Langton afterwards went to pursue his studies at Trinity College, Oxford, where he formed an acquaintance with his fellow-student, Mr. Topham Beauclerk; who, though their opinions and modes of life were so different, that it seemed utterly improbable that they should at all agree, had so ardent a love of literature, so acute an understanding, such elegance of manners, and so well discerned the excellent qualities of Mr. Langton, a gentleman eminent not only for worth and learning, but for an inexhaustible fund of entertaining conversation, that they became intimate friends.

One night, when Beauclerk and Langton had supped at a tavern in London, and sat till about three in the morning, it came into their heads to go and knock up Johnson, and see if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble. They rapped violently at the door of his chambers in the Temple, till at last he appeared in his shirt, with his little black wig on the top of his head, instead of a night-cap, and a poker in his hand, imagining, probably, that some ruf-

fians were coming to attack him. When he discovered who they were, and was told their errand, he smiled, and with great humour agreed to their proposal: "What, is it you, you dogs! I'll have a frisk with you." * He was soon drest, and they sallied forth together into Covent-Garden, where the greengrocers and fruiterers were beginning to arrange their hampers, just come in from the country. Johnson made some attempts to help them; but the honest gardeners stared so at his figure and manner, and odd interference, that he soon saw his services were not relished. They then repaired to one of the neighbouring taverns, and made a bowl of that liquor called *Bishop,* which Johnson had always liked: while in joyous contempt of sleep, from which he had been roused, he repeated the festive lines,

"Short, O short then be thy reign,
And give us to the world again!"

They did not stay long, but walked down to the Thames, took a boat, and rowed to Billingsgate. Beauclerk and Johnson were so well pleased with their amusement, that they resolved to persevere in dissipation for the rest of the day:

* [Johnson, as Mr. Kemble observes to me, might here have had in his thoughts the words of Sir John Brute, (a character which doubtless he had seen represented by Garrick), who uses nearly the same expression in "the Provoked Wife," Act III. Sc. 1.—M.]

but Langton deserted them, being engaged to breakfast with some young Ladies. Johnson scolded him for "leaving his social friends to go and sit with a set of wretched *un-idea'd* girls." Garrick being told of this ramble, said to him smartly, "I heard of your frolick t'other night. You'll be in the Chronicle." Upon which Johnson afterwards observed, "*He* durst not do such a thing. His *wife* would not *let* him!"

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavour to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke, at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity.* He, however, ob-

* [Goldsmith got a premium at a Christmas examination in Trinity College, Dublin, which I have seen.—KEARNEY.]

[A premium obtained at the Christmas examination is generally more honourable than any other, because it ascertains the person who receives it to be the first in literary merit. At the other examinations, the person thus distinguished may be only the second in merit; he who has previously obtained the same honorary reward, sometimes receiving a written certificate that *he* was the best answerer, it being a rule that not more than one premium should be adjudged to the same person in one year. See *ante,* p. 193.—M.]

served to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematicks, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physick at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent: and I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the author of "An Enquiry into the present State of polite Learning in Europe," and of "The Citizen of the World," a series of letters supposed to be written

from London by a Chinese.* No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. *"Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit."* * His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there: but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation;* but, in truth, this has been

* [He had also published in 1759, "THE BEE, being Essays on the most interesting subjects."—M.]

* See his Epitaph in Westminster Abbey, written by Dr. Johnson.

* In illusion to this, Mr. Horace Walpole, who admired his writings, said he was "an inspired idiot"; and Garrick described him as one

"——for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, and talk'd like poor Poll."

Sir Joshua Reynolds mentioned to me that he frequently heard Goldsmith talk warmly of the pleasure of being liked, and observed how hard it would be if literary excellence should preclude a man from that satisfaction, which he perceived it often did, from the envy which attended it; and therefore Sir Joshua was convinced that he was intentionally more absurd, in order to lessen himself in social intercourse, trusting that his character would be sufficiently supported by his work. If it indeed was his intention to appear absurd in company, he was often very successful. But with due deference to Sir Joshua's ingenuity, I think the conjecture too refined.

greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *unétourdi,* and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies * with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself." *

* The Misses Hornecks, one of whom is now married to Henry Bunbury, Esq. and the other to Colonel Gwyn.

* He went home with Mr. Burke to supper; and broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets.

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinized; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham,* a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his "Vicar of Wakefield." But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, Sir, (said he,) a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his 'Traveller'; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after the 'Traveller' had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

* I am willing to hope that there may have been some mistake as to this anecdote, though I had it from a dignitary of the church. Dr. Isaac Goldsmith, his near relation, was Dean of Cloyne, in 1747.

Mrs. Piozzi * and Sir John Hawkins * have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

* Anecdotes of Johnson, p. 119.

* Life of Johnson, p. 420.

* It may not be improper to annex here Mrs. Piozzi's account of this transaction, in her own words, as a specimen of the extreme inaccuracy with

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Johnsonian school. Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height; for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great Master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation, such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, "He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to John-

which all her anecdotes of Dr. Johnson are related, or rather discoloured and distorted. "I have forgotten the year, but it could scarcely, I think, be later than 1765 or 1766, that he was *called abruptly from our house after dinner,* and returning *in about three hours,* said he had been with an enraged authour, whose landlady pressed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beset him without; that he was *drinking himself drunk* with Madeira, to drown care, and fretting over a novel, which, when *finished,* was to be his *whole fortune,* but *he could not get it done for distraction,* nor could he step out of doors to offer it for sale. Mr. Johnson, therefore, sent away the bottle, and went to the bookseller, recommending the performance, and *desiring some immediate relief;* which when he brought back to the writer, *he called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch and pass their time in merriment.*" Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson, p. 119.

son"; and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson."

Dr. Goldsmith once said to Dr. Johnson, that he wished for some additional members to the LITERARY CLUB, to give it an agreeable variety; for (said he) there can now be nothing new among us: we have travelled over one another's minds. Johnson seemed a little angry, and said, "Sir, you have not travelled over *my* mind, I promise you." Sir Joshua, however, thought Goldsmith right; observing, that "when people have lived a great deal together, they know what each of them will say on every subject. A new understanding, therefore, is desirable; because though it may only furnish the same sense upon a question which would have been furnished by those with whom we are accustomed to live, yet this sense will have a different colouring; and colouring is of much effect in every thing else as well as in painting."

THE LAST DINNER

On Wednesday, June 30, the friendly confidential dinner with Sir Joshua Reynolds took place, no other company being present. Had I known that this was the last time that I should

enjoy in this world, the conversation of a friend whom I so much respected, and from whom I derived so much instruction and entertainment, I should have been deeply affected. When I now look back to it, I am vexed that a single word should have been forgotten.

Both Sir Joshua and I were so sanguine in our expectations, that we expatiated with confidence on the liberal provision which we were sure would be made for him, conjecturing whether munificence would be displayed in one large donation, or in an ample increase of his pension. He himself catched so much of our enthusiasm, as to allow himself to suppose it not impossible that our hopes might in one way or other be realized. He said that he would rather have his pension doubled than a grant of a thousand pounds; "For, (said he,) though probably I may not live to receive as much as a thousand pounds, a man would have the consciousness that he should pass the remainder of his life in splendour, how long soever it might be." Considering what a moderate proportion an income of six hundred pounds a-year bears to innumerable fortunes in this country, it is worthy of remark, that a man so truly great should think it splendour.

As an instance of extraordinary liberality of friendship, he told us, that Dr. Brocklesby had upon this occasion offered him a hundred a-year

for his life. A grateful tear started into his eye, as he spoke this in a faultering tone.

Sir Joshua and I endeavoured to flatter his imagination with agreeable prospects of happiness in Italy. "Nay, (said he,) I must not expect much of that; when a man goes to Italy merely to feel how he breathes the air, he can enjoy very little."

Our conversation turned upon living in the country, which Johnson, whose melancholy mind required the dissipation of quick successive variety, had habituated himself to consider as a kind of mental imprisonment. "Yet, Sir, (said I,) there are many people who are content to live in the country." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is in the intellectual world as in the physical world: we are told by natural philosophers that a body is at rest in the place that is fit for it; they who are content to live in the country, are *fit* for the country."

Talking of various enjoyments, I argued that a refinement of taste was a disadvantage, as they who have attained to it must be seldomer pleased than those who have no nice discrimination, and are therefore satisfied with every thing that comes in their way. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir; that is a paltry notion. Endeavour to be as perfect as you can in every respect."

I accompanied him in Sir Joshua Reynolds's coach, to the entry of Bold-court. He asked me whether I would not go with him to his house;

I declined it, from an apprehension that my spirits would sink. We bade adieu to each other affectionately in the carriage. When he had got down upon the foot-pavement, he called out, "Fare you well"; and without looking back, sprung away with a kind of pathetick briskness, if I may use that expression, which seemed to indicate a struggle to conceal uneasiness, and impressed me with a foreboding of our long, long separation.

JAMES BOSWELL

LAURENCE STERNE

MR. PERCY FITZGERALD has expressed his surprise that no one before him has narrated the life of Sterne in two volumes. We are much more surprised that he has done so. The life of Sterne was of the very simplest sort. He was a Yorkshire clergyman, and lived for the most part a sentimental, questionable, jovial life in the country. He was a queer parson, according to our notions; but in those days there were many queer parsons. Late in life he wrote a book or two, which gave him access to London society; and then he led a still more questionable and unclerical life at the edge of the great world. After that he died in something like distress, and leaving his family in something like misery. A simpler life, as far as facts go, never was known; and simple as it is, the story has been well told by Sir Walter Scott, and has been well commented on by Mr. Thackeray. It should have occurred to Mr. Fitzgerald that a subject may only have been briefly treated because it is a limited and simple subject, which suggests but few remarks, and does not require an elaborate and copious description.

There are but few materials, too, for a long life of Sterne. Mr. Fitzgerald has stuffed his volumes with needless facts about Sterne's distant relations, his great uncles and ninth cousins, in which no one now can take the least interest. Sterne's daughter, who was left ill-off, did indeed publish two little volumes of odd letters, which no clergyman's daughter would certainly have published now. But even these are too small in size and thin in matter to be spun into a copious narrative. We should in this Review have hardly given even a brief sketch of Sterne's life, if we did not think that his artistic character presented one fundamental resemblance and many superficial contrasts to that of a great man whom we have lately lost. We wish to point these out; and a few interspersed remarks on the life of Sterne will enable us to enliven the tedium of criticism with a little interest from human life.

Sterne's father was a shiftless roving Irish officer in the early part of the last century. He served in Marlborough's wars, and was cast adrift, like many greater people, by the caprice of Queen Anne and the sudden peace of Utrecht. Of him only one anecdote remains. He was, his son tells us, "a little smart man, somewhat rapid and hasty" in his temper; and during some fighting at Gibraltar he got into a squabble with another young officer, a Captain Phillips. The sub-

ject, it seems, was a goose; but that is not now material. It ended in a duel, which was fought with swords in a room. Captain Phillips pinned Ensign Sterne to a plaster-wall behind; upon which he quietly asked, or is said to have asked, "*Do* wipe the plaster off your sword before you pull it out of me," which, if true, showed at least presence of mind. Mr. Fitzgerald, in his famine of matter, discusses who this Captain Phillips was; but into this we shall not follow him.

A smart, humorous, shiftless father of this sort is not perhaps a bad father for a novelist. Sterne was dragged here and there, through scenes of life where no correct and thriving parent would ever have taken him. Years afterwards, with all their harshness softened and half their pains dissembled, Sterne dashed them upon pages which will live for ever. Of money and respectability Sterne inherited from his father little or none; but he inherited two main elements of his intellectual capital—a great store of odd scenes, and the sensitive Irish nature which appreciates odd scenes.

Sterne was born in the year 1713, the year of the peace of Utrecht, which cast his father adrift upon the world. Of his mother we know nothing. Years afterwards it was said that he behaved ill to her; at least neglected her in misery when he had the means of placing her in comfort. His

enemies neatly said that he preferred "whining over a dead ass to relieving a living mother." But these accusations have never been proved. Sterne was not remarkable for active benevolence, and certainly may have neglected an old and uninteresting woman, even though that woman was his mother; he was a bad hand at dull duties, and did not like elderly females; but we must not condemn him on simple probabilities, or upon a neat epigram and loose tradition. "The regiment," says Sterne, "in which my father served being broke, he left Ireland as soon as I was able to be carried, and came to the family seat at Elvington, near York, where his mother lived." After this he was carried about for some years, as his father led the rambling life of a poor ensign, who was one of very many engaged during a very great war, and discarded at a hasty peace. Then, perhaps luckily, his father died, and "my cousin Sterne of Elvington," as he calls him, took charge of him, and sent him to school and college. At neither of these was he very eminent. He told one story late in life which may be true, but seems very unlike the usual school-life. "My schoolmaster," he says, "had the ceiling of the schoolroom new whitewashed: the ladder remained there. I one unlucky day mounted it, and wrote with a brush in large capitals LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely punished me. My master was much

hurt at this, and said before me that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment." But "genius" is rarely popular in places of education; and it is, to say the least, remarkable that so sentimental a man as Sterne should have chanced upon so sentimental an instructor. It is wise to be suspicious of aged reminiscents; they are like persons entrusted with "untold gold;" there is no check on what they tell us.

Sterne went to Cambridge, and though he did not acquire elaborate learning, he thoroughly learned a gentlemanly stock of elementary knowledge. There is even something scholarlike about his style. It bears the indefinable traces which an exact study of words will always leave upon the use of words. He was accused of stealing learning, and it is likely enough that a great many needless quotations which were stuck into *Tristram Shandy* were abstracted from second-hand storehouses where such things are to be found. But what he stole was worth very little, and his theft may now at least be pardoned, for it injures the popularity of his works. Our present novel-readers do not at all care for an elaborate caricature of the scholastic learning; it is so obsolete that we do not care to have it mimicked. Much of *Tristram Shandy* is a sort of antediluvian fun, in which uncouth Saurian jokes play idly in an unintelligible world.

When he left college, Sterne had a piece of good fortune which in fact ruined him. He had an uncle with much influence in the church, and he was thereby seduced to enter the church. There could not have been a greater error. He had no special vice; he was notorious for no wild dissipation or unpardonable folly; he had done nothing which even in this more discreet age would be considered imprudent. He had even a refinement which must save him from gross vice, and a nicety of nature which must save him from coarse associations. But for all that he was as little fit for a Christian priest as if he had been a drunkard and a profligate. Perhaps he was less fit.

. . . Sterne was a pagan. He went into the Church; but Mr. Thackeray, no bad judge, said most justly that his sermons "have not a single Christian sentiment." They are well expressed, vigorous, moral essays; but they are no more. Much more was not expected by many congregations in the last age. The secular feeling of the English people, though always strong,—though strong in Chaucer's time, and though strong now,—was never so all-powerful as in the last century. It was in those days that the poet Crabbe was remonstrated with for introducing heaven and hell into his sermons; such extravagances, he was told, were very well for the Methodists, but a *clergyman* should confine him-

self to sober matters of this world, and show the prudence and the reasonableness of virtue during this life. There is not much of heaven and hell in Sterne's sermons, and what there is seems a rhetorical emphasis which is not essential to the argument, and which might perhaps as well be left out. Auguste Comte might have admitted most of these sermons; they are healthy statements of earthly truths, but they would be just as true if there was no religion at all. Religion helps the argument, because foolish people might be perplexed with this world, and they yield readily to another; religion enables you—such is the real doctrine of these divines, when you examine it—to coax and persuade those whom you cannot rationally convince; but it does not alter the matter in hand—it does not affect that of which you wish to persuade men, for you are but inculcating a course of conduct *in this life*. Sterne's sermons would be just as true if the secularists should succeed in their argument, and the "valuable illusion" of a deity were omitted from the belief of mankind.

However, in fact, Sterne took orders, and by the aid of his uncle, who was a church politician, and who knew the powers that were, he obtained several small livings. Being a pluralist was a trifle in those easy times; nobody then thought that the parishioners of a parson had a right to his daily presence; if some provision were made

for the performance of a Sunday service, he had done his duty, and he could spend the surplus income where he liked. He might perhaps be bound to reside, if health permitted, on one of his livings, but the law allowed him to have many, and he could not be compelled to reside on them all. Sterne preached well-written sermons on Sundays, and led an easy pagan life on other days, and no one blamed him.

He fell in love too, and after he was dead, his daughter found two or three of his love-letters to her mother, which she rashly published. They have been the unfeeling sport of persons not in love up to the present time. Years ago Mr. Thackeray used to make audiences laugh till they cried by reading one or two of them, and contrasting them with certain other letters also about his wife, but written many years later. This is the sort of thing:—

"Yes! I will steal from the world, and not a babbling tongue shall tell where I am—Echo shall not so much as whisper my hiding-place—suffer thy imagination to paint it as a little sun-gilt cottage, on the side of a romantic hill—dost thou think I will leave love and friendship behind me? No! they shall be my companions in solitude, for they will sit down and rise up with me in the amiable form of my L.—We will be as merry and as innocent as our first parents in

Paradise, before the arch fiend entered that undescribable scene.

"The kindest affections will have room to shoot and expand in our retirement, and produce such fruit as madness, and envy, and ambition have always killed in the bud.—Let the human tempest and hurricane rage at a distance, the desolation is beyond the horizon of peace. My L. has seen a polyanthus blow in December—some friendly wall has sheltered it from the biting wind. No planetary influence shall reach us, but that which presides and cherishes the sweetest flowers—God preserve us! how delightful this prospect in idea! We will build, and we will plant, in our own way—simplicity shall not be tortured by art—we will learn of nature how to live—she shall be our alchymist, to mingle all the good of life into one salubrious draught.—The gloomy family of care and distrust shall be banished from our dwelling guarded by thy kind and tutelar deity—we will sing our choral songs of gratitude, and rejoice to the end of our pilgrimage.

"Adieu, my L. Return to one who languishes for thy society. L. STERNE."

The beautiful language with which young ladies were wooed a century ago is a characteristic of that extinct age; at least, we fear that no such beautiful English will be discovered when our secret repositories are ransacked. The

age of ridicule has come in, and the age of good words has gone out.

There is no reason to doubt, however, that Sterne was really in love with Mrs. Sterne. People have doubted it because of these beautiful words; but, in fact, Sterne was just the sort of man to be subject to this kind of feeling. He took—and to this he owes his fame—the *sensitive* view of life. He regarded it not from the point of view of intellect, or conscience, or religion, but in the plain way in which natural feeling impresses, and will always impress, a natural person. He is a great author; certainly not because of great thoughts, for there is scarcely a sentence in his writings which can be called a thought; nor from sublime conceptions which enlarge the limits of our imagination, for he never leaves the sensuous,—but because of his wonderful sympathy with, and wonderful power of representing, simple human nature.

. . . In one of the "Roundabout Papers" Mr. Thackeray introduces a literary man complaining of his "sensibility." "Ah," he replies, "my good friend, your sensibility is your livelihood: if you did not feel the events and occurrences of life more acutely than others, you could not describe them better; and it is the excellence of your description by which you live.' This is precisely true of Sterne. He is a great author because he felt acutely. He is the most pathetic

of writers because he had—when writing, at least—the most pity. He was, too, we believe, pretty sharply in love with Mrs. Sterne, because he was sensitive to that sort of feeling likewise.

The difficulty of this sort of character is the difficulty of keeping it. It does not last. There is a certain bloom of sensibility and feeling about it which, in the course of nature, is apt to fade soon, and which, when it has faded, there is nothing to replace. A character with the binding elements—with a firm will, a masculine understanding, and a persistent conscience—may retain, and perhaps improve, the early and original freshness. But a loose-set though pure character the moment it is thrown into temptation sacrifices its purity, loses its gloss, and gets, so to speak, out of form entirely.

We do not know with great accuracy what Sterne's temptations were; but there was one, which we can trace with some degree of precision, which has left ineffaceable traces on his works, —which probably left some traces upon his character and conduct. There was in that part of Yorkshire a certain John Hall Stevenson, a country gentleman of some fortune, and possessed of a castle, which he called Crazy Castle. Thence he wrote tales, which he named "Crazy Tales," but which certainly are not entitled to any such innocent name. The license of that age was unquestionably wonderful. A man of good

property could write any evil. There was no legal check, or ecclesiastical check, and hardly any check of public opinion. These "Crazy Tales" have license without humour, and vice without amusement. They are the writing of a man with some wit, but only enough wit for light conversation, which becomes overworked and dull when it is reduced to regular composition and made to write long tales. The author, feeling his wit jaded, perpetually becomes immoral, in the vain hope that he will cease to be dull. He has attained his reward; he will be remembered for nauseous tiresomeness by all who have read him.

But though the "Crazy Tales" are now tedious, Crazy Castle was a pleasant place, at least to men like Sterne. He was an idle young parson, with much sensibility, much love of life and variety, and not a bit of grave goodness. The dull duties of a country parson, as we now understand them, would never have been to his taste; and the sinecure idleness then permitted to parsons left him open to every temptation. The frail texture of merely natural purity, the soft fibre of the instinctive pagan, yield to the first casualty. Exactly what sort of life they led at Crazy Castle we do not know, but vaguely we do know, and we may be sure *Mrs.* Sterne was against it.

One part of Crazy Castle has had effects

which will last as long as English literature. It had a library richly stored in old folio learning, and also in the amatory reading of other days. Every page of *Tristram Shandy* bears traces of both elements. Sterne, when he wrote it, had filled his head and his mind, not with the literature of his own age, but with the literature of past ages. He was thinking of Rabelais rather than of Fielding; of forgotten romances rather than of Richardson. He wrote, indeed, of his own times and of men he had seen, because his sensitive vivid nature would only endure to write of present things. But the *mode* in which he wrote was largely coloured by literary habits and literary fashions that had long passed away. The oddity of the book was a kind of advertisement to its genius, and that oddity consisted in the use of old manners upon new things. No analysis or account of *Tristram Shandy* could be given which would suit the present generation; being, indeed, a book without plan or order, it is in every generation unfit for analysis. This age would not endure a statement of the most telling points, as the writer thought them, and no age would like an elaborate plan of a book in which there is no plan, in which the detached remarks and separate scenes were really meant to be the whole. The notion that "a plot was to hang plums upon" was Sterne's notion exactly.

The real excellence of Sterne is single and

simple; the defects are numberless and complicated. He excels, perhaps, all other writers in mere simple description of common sensitive human action. He places before you in their simplest form the elemental facts of human life; he does not view them through the intellect, he scarcely views them through the imagination; he does but reflect the unimpaired impression which the facts of life, which does not change from age to age, make on the deep basis of human feeling, which changes as little though years go on. The example we quoted just now is as good as any other, though not better than any other. Our readers should go back to it again, or our praise may seem overcharged. It is the portrait-painting of the heart. It is as pure a reflection of mere natural feeling as literature has ever given, or will ever give. The delineation is nearly perfect. Sterne's feeling in his higher moments so much overpowered his intellect, and so directed his imagination, that no intrusive thought blemishes, no distorting fancy mars, the perfection of the representation. The disenchanting facts which deface, the low circumstances which debase the simpler feelings oftener than any other feelings, his art excludes. The feeling which would probably be coarse in the reality is refined in the picture. The unconscious tact of the nice artist heightens and chastens reality, but yet it is reality still. His mind was like a pure lake of

delicate water: it reflects the ordinary landscape, the rugged hills, the loose pebbles, the knotted and the distorted firs perfectly and as they are, yet with a charm and fascination that they have not in themselves. This is the highest attainment of art, to be at the same time nature and something more than nature.

But here the great excellence of Sterne ends as well as begins. In *Tristram Shandy* especially there are several defects which, while we are reading it, tease and disgust so much that we are scarcely willing even to admire as we ought to admire the nice pictures of human emotion. The first of these, and perhaps the worst, is the fantastic disorder of the form. It is an imperative law of the writing-art that a book should go straight on. A great writer should be able to tell a great meaning as coherently as a small writer tells a small meaning. The magnitude of the thought to be conveyed, the delicacy of the emotion to be painted, render the introductory touches of consummate art not of less importance, but of more importance. A great writer should train the mind of the reader for his greatest things; that is, by first strokes and fitting preliminaries he should form and prepare his mind for the due appreciation and the perfect enjoyment of high creations. He should not blunder upon a beauty, nor, after a great imaginative creation, should he at once fall back to bare

prose. The high-wrought feeling which a poet excites should not be turned out at once and without warning into the discomposing world. It is one of the greatest merits of the greatest living writer of fiction,—of the authoress of *Adam Bede*,—that she never brings you to anything without preparing you for it; she has no loose lumps of beauty; she puts in nothing at random; after her greatest scenes, too, a natural sequence of subordinate realities again tones down the mind to this sublunary world. Her logical style—the most logical, probably, which a woman ever wrote—aids in this matter her natural sense of due proportion. There is not a space of incoherency—not a gap. It is not natural to begin with the point of a story, and she does not begin with it. When some great marvel has been told, we all wish to know what came of it, and she tells us. Her natural way, as it seems to those who do not know its rarity, of telling what happened produces the consummate effect of gradual enchantment and as gradual disenchantment. But Sterne's style is *un*natural. He never begins at the beginning and goes straight through to the end. He shies-in a beauty suddenly; and just when you are affected he turns round and grins at it. "Ah," he says, "is it not fine?" And then he makes jokes which at that place and that time are out of place, or passes away into scholastic or other irrelevant matter,

which simple disgusts and disheartens those whom he has just delighted. People excuse all this irregularity of form by saying that it was imitated from Rabelais. But this is nonsense. Rabelais, perhaps, could not in his day venture to tell his meaning straight out; at any rate, he did not tell it. Sterne should not have chosen a model so monstrous. Incoherency is not less a defect because an imperfect foreign writer once made use of it. "You may have, sir, a reason," said Dr. Johnson, "for saying that two and two make five, but they will still make four." Just so a writer may have a reason for selecting the defect of incoherency, but it is a defect still. Sterne's best things read best out of his books,—in Enfield's *Speaker* and other places,—and you can say no worse of any one as a continuous artist.

Another most palpable defect—especially palpable nowadays—in *Tristram Shandy* is its indecency. It is quite true that the customary conventions of writing are much altered during the last century, and much which would formerly have been deemed blameless would now be censured and disliked. The audience has changed; and decency is of course in part dependent on who is within hearing. A divorce case may be talked over across a club-table with a plainness of speech and development of expression which would be indecent in a mixed party, and scandalous before young ladies. Now, a large part of old novels

may very fairly be called club-books; they speak out plainly and simply the notorious facts of the world, as men speak of them to men. Much excellent and proper masculine conversation is wholly unfit for repetition to young girls; and just in the same way books written—as was almost all old literature, for men only, or nearly only,—seem coarse enough when contrasted with novels written by young ladies upon the subjects and in the tone of the drawing-room. The change is inevitable; as soon as works of fiction are addressed to boys and girls, they must be fit for boys and girls; they must deal with a life which is real so far as it goes, but which is yet most limited; which deals with the most passionate part of life, and yet omits the errors of the passions; which aim at describing men in their relations to women, and yet omits an all but universal influence which more or less distorts and modifies all these relations.

. . . The indecency of *Tristram Shandy*—at least of the early part, which was written before Sterne had been to France—is especially an offence against taste, because of its ugliness. *Moral* indecency is always disgusting. There certainly is a sort of writing which cannot be called decent, and which describes a society to the core immoral, which nevertheless is no offence against art; it violates a higher code than that of taste, but it does not violate the code of taste. The

Mémoires de Grammont—hundreds of French memoirs about France—are of this kind, more or less. They describe the refined, witty, elegant immorality of an idle aristocracy. They describe a life "unsuitable to such a being as man in such a world as the present one," in which there are no high aims, no severe duties, where some precepts of morals seem not so much to be sometimes broken as to be generally suspended and forgotten; such a life, in short, as God has never suffered men to lead on this earth long, which He has always crushed out by calamity and revolution. This life, though an offence in morals, was not an offence in taste. It was an elegant, a *pretty* thing while it lasted. Especially in enhancing description, where the alloy of life may be omitted, where nothing vulgar need be noticed, where everything elegant may be neatly painted, —such a world is elegant enough. Morals and policy must decide how far such delineations are permissible or expedient; but the art of beauty, —but criticism has no objection to them. They are pretty paintings of pretty objects, and that is all it has to say. They may very easily do harm; if generally read among the young of the middle class, they would be sure to do harm: they would teach not a few to aim at a sort of refinement denied them by circumstances, and to neglect the duties allotted them; it would make shopmen "bad imitations of polished ungodli-

ness," and also bad shopmen. But still, though it would in such places be noxious literature, in itself it would be pretty literature. The critic must praise it, though the moralist must condemn it, and perhaps the politicians forbid it.

But *Tristram Shandy's* indecency is the very opposite to this refined sort. It consists in allusions to certain inseparable accompaniments of actual life which are not beautiful, which can never be made interesting, which would, *if* they were decent, be dull and uninteresting. There is, it appears, a certain excitement in putting such matters into a book; there is a minor exhilaration even in petty crime. At first such things look so odd in print that you go on reading them to see what they look like; but you soon give up. What is disenchanting or even disgusting in reality does not become enchanting or endurable in delineation. You are more angry at it in literature than in life; there is much which is barbarous and animal in reality that we could wish away; we endure it because we cannot help it, because we did not make it and cannot alter it, because it is an inseparable part of this inexplicable world. But why we should put this coarse alloy, this dross of life, into the *optional* world of literature, which we can make as we please, it is impossible to say. The needless introduction of accessory ugliness is always a sin in art, and is not at all less so when such ugli-

ness is disgusting and improper. *Tristram Shandy* is incurably tainted with a pervading vice; it dwells at length on, it seeks after, it returns to, it gloats over, the most unattractive part of the world.

There is another defect in *Tristram Shandy* which would of itself remove it from the list of first-rate books, even if those which we have mentioned did not do so. It contains eccentric characters only. Some part of this defect may be perhaps explained by one peculiarity of its origin. Sterne was so sensitive to the picturesque parts of life, that he wished to paint the picturesque parts of the people he hated. Country-towns in those days abounded in odd characters. They were out of the way of the great opinion of the world, and shaped themselves to little opinions of their own. They regarded the customs which the place had inherited as the customs which were proper for it, and which it would be foolish, if not wicked, to try to change. This gave English country life a motley picturesqueness then, which it wants now, when London ideas shoot out every morning, and carry on the wings of the railway a uniform creed to each cranny of the kingdom, north and south, east and west. These little public opinions of little places wanted, too, the crushing power of the great public opinion of our own day; at the worst, a man could escape from them into some different

place which had customs and doctrines that suited him better. We now may fly into another "city," but it is all the same Roman empire; the same uniform justice, the one code of heavy law presses us down and makes us—the sensible part of us at least—as like other people as we can make ourselves. The public opinion of country-towns yielded soon to individual exceptions; it had not the confidence in itself which the opinion of each place now receives from the accordant and simultaneous echo of a hundred places. If a man chose to be queer, he was bullied for a year or two, then it was settled that he was "queer;" that was the fact about him, and must be accepted. In a year or so he became an "institution" of the place, and the local pride would have been grieved if he had amended the oddity which suggested their legends and added a flavour to their life. Of course, if a man was rich and influential, he might soon disregard the mere opinion of the petty locality. Every place has wonderful traditions of old rich men who did exactly as they pleased, because they could set at naught the opinions of the neighbours, by whom they were feared, and who did not, as now, dread the unanimous conscience which does not fear even a squire of 2000*l.* a year, or a banker of 800*l.*, because it is backed by the wealth of London and the magnitude of all the country. There is little oddity in country-towns

now; they are detached scraps of great places; but in Sterne's time there was much, and he used it unsparingly.

Much of the delineation is of the highest merit. Sterne knew how to describe eccentricity, for he showed its relation to our common human nature: he showed how we were related to it, how in some sort and in some circumstances we might ourselves become it. He reduced the abnormal formation to the normal rules. Except upon this condition, eccentricity is no fit subject for literary art. Every one must have known characters which, if they were put down in books, barely and as he sees them, would seem monstrous and disproportioned,—which would disgust all readers,—which every critic would term unnatural. While characters are monstrous, they should be kept out of books; they are ugly unintelligibilities, foreign to the realm of true art. But as soon as they can be explained to us, as soon as they are shown in their union with, in their outgrowth from common human nature, they are the best subjects for great art—for they are new subjects. They teach us, not the old lesson which our fathers knew, but a new lesson which will please us and make us better than them. Hamlet is an eccentric character, one of the most eccentric in literature; but because, by the art of the poet, we are made to understand that he is a possible, a *vividly* possible man, he

enlarges our conceptions of human nature; he takes us out of the bounds of commonplace. He "instructs us by means of delight." Sterne does this too. Mr. Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Mrs. Shandy,—for in strictness she too is eccentric from her abnormal commonplaceness,—are beings of which the possibility is brought home to us, which we feel we could under circumstances and by influences become; which, though contorted and twisted, are yet spun out of the same elementary nature, the same thread as we are. Considering how odd these characters are, the success of Sterne is marvellous, and his art in this respect consummate. But yet on a point most nearly allied it is very faulty. Though each individual character is shaded off into human nature, the whole is not shaded off into the world. This society of originals and oddities is left to stand by itself, as if it were a natural and ordinary society,—a society easily conceivable and needing no explanation. Such is not the manner of the great masters; in their best works a constant atmosphere of half commonplace personages surrounds and shades off, illustrates and explains every central group of singular persons.

On the whole, therefore, the judgment of criticism on *Tristram Shandy* is concise and easy. It is immortal because of certain scenes suggested by Sterne's curious experience, detected by his singular sensibility, and heightened by his

delineative and discriminative imagination. It is defective because its style is fantastic, its method illogical and provoking; because its indecency is of the worst sort, as far as in such matters an artistic judgment can speak of worst and best; because its world of characters forms an incongruous group of singular persons utterly dissimilar to and irreconcilable with the world in which we live. It is a great work of art, but of barbarous art. Its mirth is boisterous. It is *provincial*. It is redolent of an inferior society; of those who think crude animal spirits in themselves delightful, who do not know that, without wit to point them or humour to convey them, they are disagreeable to others; who like disturbing transitions, blank pages, and tricks of style; who do not know that a simple and logical form of expression is the most effective, if not the easiest—the least laborious to readers, if not always the most easily attained by writers.

The oddity of *Tristram Shandy* was . . . a great aid to its immediate popularity. If an author were to stand on his head now and then in Cheapside, his eccentricity would bring him into contact with the police, but it would advertise his writings; they would sell better: people would like to see what was said by a great author who was so odd as to stand so. Sterne put his eccentricity into his writings, and therefore came into collision with the critics; but he

attained the same end. His book sold capitally. As with all popular authors, he went to London; he was fêted. "The *man* Sterne," growled Dr. Johnson, "has dinner engagements for three months." The upper world—ever desirous of novelty, ever tired of itself, ever anxious to be amused—was in hopes of a new wit. It naturally hoped that the author of *Tristram Shandy* would talk well, and it sent for him to talk.

He did talk well, it appears, though not always very correctly, and never very clerically. His appearance was curious, but yet refined. Eager eyes, a wild look, a long lean frame, and what he called a cadaverous bale of goods for a body, made up an odd exterior, which attracted notice, and did not repel liking. He looked like a scarecrow with bright eyes. With a random manner, but not without a nice calculation, he discharged witticisms at London parties. His keen nerves told him which were fit witticisms; *they* took, and *he* was applauded.

He published some sermons too. That tolerant age liked, it is instructive as well as amusing to think, sermons by the author of *Tristram Shandy*. People wonder at the rise of Methodism; but ought they to wonder? If a clergyman publishes his sermons *because* he has written an indecent novel—a novel which is purely pagan—which is outside the ideas of Christianity, whose author can scarcely have been inside of them—

if a man so made and so circumstanced is *as such* to publish Christian sermons, surely Christianity is a joke and a dream. Wesley was right in this at least; if Christianity be true, the upper life of the last century was based on rotten falsehood. A world which is really secular—which professes to be Christian, is the worst of worlds.

The only point in which Sterne resembles a clergyman of our own time is, that he lost his voice. That peculiar affection of the chest and throat, which is hardly known among barristers, but which inflicts such suffering upon parsons, attacked him also. Sterne too, as might be expected, went abroad for it. He "spluttered French," he tells us, with success in Paris; the accuracy of the grammar some phrases in his letters would lead us to doubt; but few, very few Yorkshire parsons could then talk French at all, and there was doubtless a fine tact and sensibility in what he said. A literary phenomenon wishing to enjoy society, and able to amuse society, has ever been welcome in the Parisian world. After Paris, Sterne went to the south of France, and on to Italy, lounging easily in pretty places, and living comfortably, as far as one can see, upon the profits of *Tristram Shandy*. Literary success has seldom changed more suddenly and completely the course of a man's life. For years Sterne resided in a country parsonage, and the sources of his highest excitement were a

country-town full of provincial oddities, and a "Crazy Castle" full of the license and the whims of a country squire. On a sudden London, Paris, and Italy were opened to him. From a few familiar things he was suddenly transferred to many unfamiliar things. He was equal to them, though the change came so suddenly in middle life—though the change from a secluded English district to the great and interesting scenes was far greater, far fuller of unexpected sights and unforeseen phenomena, than it can be now—when travelling is common—when the newspaper is "abroad"—when every one has in his head some feeble image of Europe and the world. Sterne showed the delicate docility which belongs to a sensitive and experiencing nature. He understood and enjoyed very much of this new and strange life, if not the whole.

The proof of this remains written in the *Sentimental Journey*. There is no better painting of first and easy impressions than that book. After all which has been written on the *ancien régime*, an Englishman at least will feel a fresh instruction on reading these simple observations. They are instructive *because* of their simplicity. The old world at heart was not like that; there were depths and realities, latent forces and concealed results, which were hidden from Sterne's eye, which it would have been quite out of his way to think of or observe. But the old world *seemed*

like that. This was the spectacle of it as it was seen by an observing stranger; and we take it up, not to know what was the truth, but to know what we should have thought to be the truth if we had lived in those times. People say *Eöthen* is not like the real East; very likely it is not, but it is like what an imaginative young Englishman would *think* the East. Just so, the *Sentimental Journey* is not the true France of the old monarchy, but it is exactly what an observant quick-eyed Englishman might fancy that France to be. This has given it popularity; this still makes it a valuable relic of the past. It is not true to the outward nature of real life, but it is true to the reflected image of that life in an imaginative and sensitive man.

. . . In two points the *Sentimental Journey,* viewed with the critic's eye and as a mere work of art, is a great improvement upon *Tristram Shandy*. The style is simpler and better; it is far more connected; it does not jump about, or leave a topic *because* it is interesting; it does not worry the reader with fantastic transitions, with childish contrivances and rhetorical intricacies. Highly elaborate the style certainly is, and in a certain sense artificial; it is full of nice touches, which must have come only upon reflection—a careful polish and judicious enhancement, in which the critic sees many a trace of time

and toil. But a style delicately adjusted and exquisitely polished belongs to such a subject. Sterne undertook to write, *not* of the coarse business of life—very strong common sort of words are best for that—*not* even of interesting outward realities, which may be best described in a nice and simple style; but of the passing moods of human nature, of the impressions which a sensitive nature receives from the world without; and it is only the nicest art and the most dexterous care which can fit an obtuse language to such fine employment. How language was first invented and made we may not know; but beyond doubt it was shaped and fashioned into its present state by common ordinary men and women using it for common and ordinary purposes. They wanted a carving-knife, not a razor or lancet. And those great artists who have to use language for more exquisite purposes, who employ it to describe changing sentiments and momentary fancies and the fluctuating and indefinite inner world, must use curious nicety, and hidden but effectual artifice, else they cannot duly punctuate their thoughts and slice the fine edges of their reflexions. A hair's-breadth is as important to them as a yard's-breadth to a common workman. Sterne's style has been criticized as artificial; but it is justly and rightly artificial, because language used in its natural

and common mode was not framed to delineate, cannot delineate, the delicate subjects with which he occupies himself.

That contact with the world, and with the French world especially, should teach Sterne to abandon the arbitrary and fantastic structure of *Tristram Shandy* is most natural. French prose may be unreasonable in its meaning, but is ever rational in its structure; it is logic itself. It will not endure that the reader's mind should be jarred by rough transitions, or distracted by irrelevant oddities. *Antics* in style are prohibited by its severe code, just as eccentricities in manner are kept down by the critical tone of a fastidious society. In a barbarous country oddity may be attractive; in the great world it never is, except for a moment; it is on trial to see whether it is really oddity, to see if it does not contain elements which may be useful to, which may be naturalized in society at large. But inherent eccentricity, oddity *pur et simple,* is *immiscible* in the great ocean of universal thought; it is apart from it, even when it floats in and is contained in it; very, very soon it is cast out from the busy waters, and left alone upon the beach. Sterne had the sense to be taught by the sharp touch of the world; he threw aside the "player's garb" which he had been tempted to assume. He described too, as was equally natural, the ugly indecency of *Tristram Shandy*. We will not un-

dertake to defend the morality of certain scenes in the *Sentimental Journey;* there are several which might easily do much harm; but there is nothing displeasing to the natural man in them. They are nice enough; to those whose æsthetic nature has not been laid waste by their moral nature they are attractive. They have a dangerous prettiness, which may easily incite to practical evil; but in itself, and separated from its censurable consequences, such prettiness is an artistic perfection. It was natural that the aristocratic world should easily teach Sterne that separation between the laws of beauty and the laws of morality which has been familiar to it during many ages—which makes so much of its essence.

Mrs. Sterne did not prosper all this time. She went abroad and stayed at Montpellier with her husband; but it is not wonderful that a mere "wife," taken out of Yorkshire, should be unfit for the great world. The domestic appendices of men who rise much hardly ever suit the high places at which they arrive. Mrs. Sterne was no exception. She seems to have been sensible, but it was *domestic* sense. It was of the small world, small: it was fit to regulate the Yorkshire parsonage, it was suitable to a small *ménage* even at Montpellier. But there was a deficiency in general mind. She did not, we apprehend, comprehend or appreciate the new thoughts and feelings which a new and great experience had

awakened in her husband's mind. His mind moved, but hers could not; she was anchored, but he was at sea.

To fastidious writers who will only use very dignified words, there is much difficulty in describing Sterne's life in his celebrity. But to humbler persons, who can only describe the things of society in the words of society, the case is simple. Sterne was "an old flirt." These are short and expressive words, and they tell the whole truth. There is no good reason to suspect his morals, but he dawdled about pretty women. He talked at fifty with the admiring tone of twenty; pretended to "freshness" of feeling; though he had become mature, did not put away immature things. That he had any real influence over women is very unlikely; he was a celebrity, and they liked to exhibit him; he was amusing, and they liked him to amuse them. But they doubtless felt that he too was himself a joke. Women much respect real virtue; they much admire strong and successful immorality; but they neither admire nor respect the timid age which affects the forms of vice without its substance; which preserves the exterior of youth, though the reality is departed; which is insidious but not dangerous, sentimental but not passionate. Of this sort was Sterne, and he had his reward. Women of the world are willing to accept any admiration, but this sort they accept

with suppressed and latent sarcasm. They ridiculed his imbecility while they accepted his attentions and enjoyed his society.

Many men have lived this life with but minor penalties, and justly; for though perhaps a feeble and contemptible, it is not a bad or immoral life. But Sterne has suffered a very severe though a delayed and posthumous penalty. He was foolish enough to write letters to some of his friends, and after his death, to get money, his family published them. This is the sort of thing:

"Eliza will receive my books with this. The sermons came all hot from the heart; I wish that I could give them any title to be offered to yours. —The others came from the head—I am more indifferent about their reception.

"I know not how it comes about, but I am half in love with you—I ought to be wholly so; for I never valued (or saw more good qualities to value) or thought more of one of your sex than of you; so adieu.

"Yours faithfully,
"if not affectionately,
"L. STERNE."

"I cannot rest, Eliza, though I shall call on you at half-past twelve, till I know how you do.—May thy dear face smile, as thou risest, like the sun of this morning. I was much grieved to bear of your alarming indisposition yesterday;

and disappointed too, at not being let in. Remember, my dear, that a friend has the same right as a physician. The etiquettes of this town (you'll say) say otherwise.—No matter! Delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines.

"I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven, when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and wilt be glad to see thy Bramin."

This Eliza was a Mrs. Draper, the wife of a judge in India, "much respected in that part of the world." We know little of Eliza, except that there is a stone in Bristol cathedral

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
MRS. ELIZABETH DRAPER,
IN WHOM
GENIUS AND BENEVOLENCE
WERE UNITED.
SHE DIED AUGUST 3, 1778, AGED 35.

Let us hope she possessed, in addition to genius and benevolence, the good sense to laugh at Sterne's letters.

In truth, much of the gloss and delicacy of Sterne's pagan instinct had faded away by this

time. He still retained his fine sensibility, his exquisite power of entering into and of delineating plain human nature. But the world had produced its inevitable effect on that soft and voluptuous disposition. It is not, as we have said, that he was guilty of grave offences or misdeeds; he made what he would have called a "splutter of vice," but he would seem to have committed very little. Yet, as with most minds which have exempted themselves from rigid principle, there was a diffused texture of general laxity. The fibre had become imperfect; the moral constitution was impaired; the high colour of rottenness had come at last out, and replaced the delicate bloom and softness of the early fruit. There is no need to write commonplace sermons on an ancient text. The beauty and charm of natural paganism will not endure the stress and destruction of this rough and complicated world. An instinctive purity will preserve men for a brief time, but hardly through a long and varied life of threescore and ten years.

Sterne, however, did not live so long. In 1768 he came to London for the last time, and enjoyed himself much. He dined with literary friends and supped with fast friends. He liked both. But the end was at hand. His chest had long been delicate; he got a bad cold which became a pleurisy, and died in a London lodging—

a footman sent by "some gentlemen who were dining," and a hired nurse, being the only persons present. His family were away; and he had devoted himself to intellectual and luxurious enjoyments, which are at least as sure to make a lonely deathbed as a refined and cultivated life. "Self-scanned, self-centred, self-secure," a man may perhaps live, but even so *by himself* he will be sure to die. For self-absorbed men the world at large cares little; as soon as they cease to amuse, or to be useful, it flings them aside, and they die alone. Even Sterne's grave, they say, was so obscure and neglected that the corpse-stealers ventured to open it, and his body was dissected without being recognized. The life of literary men is often a kind of sermon in itself; for the pursuit of fame, when it is contrasted with the grave realities of life, seems more absurd and trifling than most pursuits, and to leave less behind it. Mere *amusers* are never respected. It would be harsh to call Sterne a mere amuser, he is much more; but so the contemporary world regarded him. They laughed at his jests, disregarded his death-bed, and neglected his grave.

WALTER BAGEHOT.

LORD BYRON

THE pretty fable by which the Duchess of Orleans illustrates the character of her son the regent might, with little change, be applied to Byron. All the fairies, save one, had been bidden to his cradle. All the gossips had been profuse of their gifts. One had bestowed nobility, another genius, a third beauty. The malignant elf who had been uninvited came last, and, unable to reverse what her sisters had done for their favourite, had mixed up a curse with every blessing. In the rank of Lord Byron, in his understanding, in his character, in his very person, there was a strange union of opposite extremes. He was born to all that men covet and admire. But in every one of those eminent advantages which he possessed over others, there was mingled something of misery and debasement. He was sprung from a house, ancient indeed and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of crimes and follies, which had attained a scandalous publicity. The kinsman whom he succeeded had died poor, and, but for merciful judges, would have died upon the gallows. The young

peer had great intellectual powers; yet there was an unsound part in his mind. He had naturally a generous and tender heart; but his temper was wayward and irritable. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot the deformity of which the beggars in the streets mimicked. Distinguished at once by the strength and by the weakness of his intellect, affectionate yet perverse, a poor lord, and a handsome cripple, he required, if ever man required, the firmest and the most judicious training. But, capriciously as nature had dealt with him, the relative to whom the office of forming his character was intrusted was more capricious still. She passed from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of fondness. At one time she stifled him with her caresses, at another time she insulted his deformity. He came into the world, and the world treated him as his mother treated him—sometimes with kindness, sometimes with severity, never with justice. It indulged him without discrimination, and punished him without discrimination. He was truly a spoiled child; not merely the spoiled child of his parents, but the spoiled child of nature, the spoiled child of fortune, the spoiled child of fame, the spoiled child of society. His first poems were received with a contempt which, feeble as they were, they did not absolutely deserve. The poem which he published on his return from his travels was, on the other hand, extolled far above its merits.

At twenty-four, he found himself on the highest pinnacle of literary fame, with Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, and a crowd of other distinguished writers, beneath his feet. There is scarcely an instance in history of so sudden a rise to so dizzy an eminence.

Everything that could stimulate and everything that could gratify the strongest propensities of our nature—the gaze of a hundred drawing-rooms, the acclamations of the whole nation, the applause of applauded men, the love of the loveliest of women—all this world, and all the glory of it, were at once offered to a young man, to whom nature had given violent passions, and whom education had never taught to control them. He lived as many men live who have no similar excuses to plead for their faults. But his countrymen and his countrywomen would love him and admire him. They were resolved to see in his excesses only the flash and outbreak of that same fiery mind which glowed in his poetry. He attacked religion; yet in religious circles his name was mentioned with fondness, and in many religious publications his works were censured with singular tenderness. He lampooned the Prince Regent; yet he could not alienate the Tories. Everything, it seemed, was to be forgiven to youth, rank, and genius.

Then came the reaction. Society, capricious in its indignation, as it had been capricious in its

fondness, flew into a rage with its froward and petted darling. He had been worshipped with an irrational idolatry. He was persecuted with an irrational fury. Much has been written about those unhappy domestic occurrences which decided the fate of his life. Yet nothing ever was positively known to the public, but this—that he quarelled with his lady, and that she refused to live with him. There have been hints in abundance, and shrugs and shakings of the head, and "Well, well, we know," and "We could an if we would," and "If we list to speak," and "There be that might an they list." But we are not aware that there is before the world, substantiated by credible or even by tangible evidence, a single fact indicating that Lord Byron was more to blame than any other man who is on bad terms with his wife. The professional men whom Lady Byron consulted were undoubtedly of opinion that she ought not to live with her husband. But it is to be remembered that they formed that opinion without hearing both sides. We do not say, we do not mean to insinuate that Lady Byron was in any respect to blame. We think that those who condemn her on the evidence which is now before the public are as rash as those who condemn her husband. We will not pronounce any judgment; we cannot, even in our own minds, form any judgment on a transaction which is so imperfectly known to us. It

would have been well, if at the time of the separation, all those who knew as little about the matter then as we know about it now, had shown that forbearance, which, under such circumstances, is but common justice.

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years, our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly, some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping-boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflect very complacently on our own severity, and compare with great pride the high standard of morals established in England with the Parisian laxity. At length our anger is satisfied. Our victim is

ruined and heartbroken, and our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.

It is clear that those vices which destroy domestic happiness ought to be as much as possible repressed. It is equally clear that they cannot be repressed by penal legislation. It is therefore right and desirable that public opinion should be directed against them. But it should be directed against them uniformly, steadily, and temperately, not by sudden fits and starts. There should be one weight and one measure. Decimation is always an objectional mode of punishment. It is the resource of judges too indolent and hasty to investigate facts and to discriminate nicely between shades of guilt. It is an irrational practice, even when adopted by military tribunals. When adopted by the tribunal of public opinion, it is infinitely more irrational. It is good that a certain portion of disgrace should constantly attend on certain bad actions; but it is not good that the offenders merely have to stand the risk of a lottery of infamy; that ninety-nine out of every hundred should escape, and that the hundredth, perhaps the most innocent of the hundred, should pay for all. We remember to have seen a mob assembled in Lincoln's Inn to hoot a gentleman, against whom the most oppressive proceeding known to the English law was then in progress. He was hooted because he had been an indifferent and

unfaithful husband, as if some of the most popular men of the age, Lord Nelson, for example, had not been indifferent and unfaithful husbands. We remember a still stronger case. Will posterity believe, that in an age in which men, whose gallantries were universally known, and had been legally proved, filled some of the highest offices in the state and in the army, presided at the meetings of religious and benevolent institutions, were the delight of every society and the favourites of the multitude, a crowd of moralists went to the theatre, in order to pelt a poor actor for disturbing the conjugal felicity of an alderman? What there was in the circumstances, either of the offender, or of the sufferer, to vindicate the zeal of the audience, we could never conceive. It has never been supposed that the situation of an actor is peculiarly favorable to the rigid virtues, or that an alderman enjoys any special immunity from injuries such as that which on this occasion roused the anger of the public. But such is the justice of mankind.

In these cases, the punishment was excessive; but the offence was known and proved. The case of Lord Byron was harder. True Jedwood justice was dealt out to him. First came the execution, then the investigation, and last of all, or rather not at all, the accusation. The public, without knowing anything whatever about the transactions in his family, flew into a violent

passion with him, and proceeded to invent stories which might justify its anger. Ten or twenty different accounts of the separation, inconsistent with each other, with themselves, and with common sense, circulated at the same time. What evidence there might be for any one of these, the virtuous people who repeated them neither knew nor cared. For in fact these stories were not the causes, but the effects of the public indignation. They resembled those loathsome slanders which Goldsmith and other abject libellers of the same class were in the habit of publishing about Bonaparte—how he poisoned a girl with arsenic, when he was at the military school—how he hired a grenadier to shoot Dessaix at Marengo—how he filled St. Cloud with all the pollutions of Capreæ. There was a time when anecdotes like these obtained some credence from persons, who, hating the French Emperor, without knowing why, were eager to believe anything which might justify their hatred. Lord Byron fared in the same way. His countrymen were in a bad humour with him. His writings and his character had lost the charm of novelty. He had been guilty of the offence which, of all offences, is punished most severely; he had been over praised; he had excited too warm an interest: and the public, with its usual justice, chastised him for its own folly. The attach-

ments of the multitude bear no small resemblance to those of the wanton enchantress in the Arabian Tales, who, when the forty days of her fondness were over, was not content with dismissing her lovers, but condemned them to expiate, in loathsome shapes, and under severe punishments, the crime of having once pleased her too well.

The obloquy which Byron had to endure was such as might well have shaken a more constant mind. The newspapers were filled with lampoons. The theatres shook with execrations. He was excluded from circles where he had lately been the observed of all observers. All those creeping things, that riot in the decay of nobler natures, hastened to their repast; and they were right; they did after their kind. It is not every day that the savage envy of aspiring dunces is gratified by the agonies of such a spirit and the degradation of such a name.

The unhappy man left his country forever. The howl of contumely followed him across the sea, up the Rhine, over the Alps; it gradually waxed fainter; it died away. Those who had raised it began to ask each other, what, after all, was the matter about which they had been so clamorous; and wished to invite back the criminal whom they had just chased from them. His poetry became more popular than it ever had been; and his complaints were read with tears by

thousands and tens of thousands who had never seen his face.

He had fixed his home on the shores of the Adriatic, in the most picturesque and interesting of cities, beneath the brightest of skies, and by the brightest of seas. Censoriousness was not the vice of the neighbours whom he had chosen. They were a race corrupted by a bad government and a bad religion; long renowned for skill in the arts of voluptuousness, and tolerant of all the caprices of sensuality. From the public opinion of the country of his adoption he had nothing to dread. With the public opinion of the country of his birth he was at open war. He plunged into the wild and desperate excesses, ennobled by no generous or tender sentiment. From his Venetian harem, he sent forth volume after volume, full of eloquence, of wit, of pathos, of ribaldry, and of bitter disdain. His health sank under the effects of his intemperance. His hair turned grey. His food ceased to nourish him. A hectic fever withered him up. It seemed that his body and mind were about to perish together.

From this wretched degradation he was in some measure rescued by an attachment, culpable indeed, yet such as, judged by the standard of morality established in the country where he lived, might be called virtuous. But an imagination polluted by vice, a temper imbittered by misfortune, and a frame habituated to the fatal excite-

ment of intoxication, prevented him from fully enjoying the happiness which he might have derived from the purest and most tranquil of his many attachments. Midnight draughts of ardent spirits and Rhenish wines had begun to work the ruin of his fine intellect. His verse lost much of the energy and condensation which had distinguished it. But he would not resign, without a struggle, the empire which he had exercised over the men of his generation. A new dream of ambition arose before him, to be the centre of a literary party; the great mover of an intellectual revolution; to guide the public mind of England from his Italian retreat, as Voltaire had guided the public mind of France from the villa of Ferney. With this hope, as it should seem, he established *The Liberal*. But, powerfully as he had affected the imaginations of his contemporaries, he mistook his own powers, if he hoped to direct their opinions: and he still more grossly mistook his own disposition, if he thought that he could long act in concert with other men of letters. The plan failed, and failed ignominiously. Angry with himself, angry with his coadjutors, he relinquished it; and turned to another project, the last and the noblest of his life.

A nation, once the first among the nations, pre-eminent in knowledge, pre-eminent in military glory, the cradle of philosophy, of eloquence, and of the fine arts, had been for ages bowed down

under a cruel yoke. All the vices which tyranny generates—the abject vices which it generates in those who submit to it, the ferocious vices which it generates in those who struggle against it—had deformed the character of that miserable race. The valour which had won the great battle of human civilization, which had saved Europe, and subjugated Asia, lingered only among pirates and robbers. The ingenuity, once so conspicuously displayed in every department of physical and moral science, had been depraved into a timid and servile cunning. On a sudden, this degraded people had risen on their oppressors. Discountenanced or betrayed by the surrounding potentates, they had found in themselves something of that which might well supply the place of all foreign assistance—something of the energy of their fathers.

As a man of letters, Lord Byron could not but be interested in the event of this contest. His political opinions, though, like all his opinions, unsettled, leaned strongly toward the side of liberty. He had assisted the Italian insurgents with his purse; and if their struggle against the Austrian government had been prolonged, would probably have assisted them with his sword. But to Greece he was attached by peculiar ties. He had, when young, resided in that country. Much of his most splendid and popular poetry had been inspired by its scenery and by its history. Sick of

inaction, degraded in his own eyes by his private vices and by his literary failures, pining for untried excitement and honourable distinction, he carried his exhausted body and his wounded spirit to the Grecian camp.

His conduct in his new situation showed so much vigour and good sense as to justify us in believing, that, if his life had been prolonged, he might have distinguished himself as a soldier and a politician. But pleasure and sorrow had done the work of seventy years upon his delicate frame. The hand of death was on him; he knew it; and the only wish which he uttered was that he might die sword in hand.

This was denied to him. Anxiety, exertion, exposure, and those fatal stimulants which had become indispensable to him, soon stretched him on a sick-bed, in a strange land, amidst strange faces, without one human being that he loved near him. There, at thirty-six, the most celebrated Englishman of the nineteenth century closed his brilliant and miserable career.

THOMAS B. MACAULAY.

THE STRANGE CHILDHOOD OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË

MR. BRONTË remained for five years at Hartshead, in the parish of Dewsbury. There he was married, and his two children, Maria and Elizabeth, were born. At the expiration of that period he had the living of Thornton, in Bradford parish. Some of those great West Riding parishes are almost like bishoprics for their amount of population and number of churches. Thornton church is a little Episcopal chapel of ease, rich in Nonconformist monuments, as of Accepted Lister and his friend Dr. Hall. The neighbourhood is desolate and wild; great tracts of bleak land, enclosed by stone dykes, sweeping up Clayton heights. The church itself looks ancient and solitary, and as if left behind by the great stone mills of a flourishing Independent firm, and the solid square chapel built by the members of that denomination. Altogether not so pleasant a place as Hartshead, with its ample outlook over cloud-shadowed, sun-flecked plain, and hill rising beyond hill to form the distant horizon.

Here, at Thornton, Charlotte Brontë was

born, on the 21st of April 1816. Fast on her heels followed Patrick Branwell, Emily Jane, and Anne. After the birth of this last daughter, Mrs. Brontë's health began to decline. It is hard work to provide for the little tender wants of many young children where the means are but limited. The necessaries of food and clothing are much more easily supplied than the almost equal necessaries of attendance, care, soothing, amusement, and sympathy. Maria Brontë, the eldest of six, could only have been a few months more than six years old when Mr. Brontë removed to Haworth, on 25th February 1820. Those who knew her then describe her as grave, thoughtful, and quiet, to a degree far beyond her years. Her childhood was no childhood; the cases are rare in which the possessors of great gifts have known the blessings of that careless happy time; *their* unusual powers stir within them, and, instead of the natural life of perception—the objective, as the Germans call it—they begin the deeper life of reflection—the subjective.

Little Maria Brontë was delicate and small in appearance, which seemed to give greater effect to her wonderful precocity of intellect. She must have been her mother's companion and helpmate in many a household and nursery experience, for Mr. Brontë was, of course, much engaged in his study; and besides, he was not naturally fond of children, and felt their frequent appearance

on the scene as a drag both on his wife's strength, and as an interruption to the comfort of the household.

Haworth Parsonage is an oblong stone house, facing down the hill on which the village stands, and with the front door right opposite to the western door of the church, distant about a hundred yards. Of this space twenty yards or so in depth are occupied by the grassy garden, which is scarcely wider than the house. The graveyard lies on two sides of the house and garden. The house consists of four rooms on each floor, and is two stories high. When the Brontës took possession, they made the larger parlour, to the left of the entrance, the family sitting-room, while that on the right was appropriated to Mr. Brontë as a study. Behind this was the kitchen; behind the former, a sort of flagged store-room. Upstairs were four bedchambers of similar size, with the addition of a small apartment over the passage, or "lobby," as we call it in the north. This was to the front, the staircase going up right opposite to the entrance. There is the pleasant old fashion of window seats all through the house; and one can see that the parsonage was built in the days when wood was plentiful, as the massive stair banisters, and the wainscots, and the heavy window-frames testify.

This little extra upstairs room was appropriated to the children. Small as it was, it was not

called a nursery; indeed, it had not the comfort of a fireplace in it; the servants—two affectionate, warm-hearted sisters, who cannot now speak of the family without tears—called the room the "children's study." The age of the eldest student was perhaps by this time seven.

The people in Haworth were none of them very poor. Many of them were employed in the neighbouring worsted mills; a few were mill owners and manufacturers in a small way; there were also some shopkeepers for the humbler and everyday wants; but for medical advice, for stationery, books, law, dress, or dainties, the inhabitants had to go to Keighley. There were several Sunday schools; the Baptists had taken the lead in instituting them, the Wesleyans had followed, the Church of England had brought up the rear. Good Mr. Grimshaw, Wesley's friend, had built a humble Methodist chapel, but it stood close to the road leading on to the moor; the Baptists then raised a place of worship, with the distinction of being a few yards back from the highway; and the Methodists have since thought it well to erect another and a larger chapel, still more retired from the road. Mr. Brontë was ever on kind and friendly terms with each denomination as a body; but from individuals in the village the family stood aloof, unless some direct service was required, from the first. "They kept themselves very close," is the account given

by those who remember Mr. and Mrs. Brontë's coming amongst them. I believe many of the Yorkshiremen would object to the system of parochial visiting; their surly independence would revolt from the idea of anyone having a right, from his office, to inquire into their condition, to counsel, or to admonish them. The old hill-spirit lingers in them which coined the rhyme, inscribed on the under part of one of the seats in the sedilia of Whalley Abbey, not many miles from Haworth,

"Who mells wi' what another does
Had best go home and shoe his goose."

I asked an inhabitant of a district close to Haworth what sort of a clergyman they had at the church which he attended.

"A rare good one," said he: "he minds his own business, and ne'er troubles himself with ours."

Mr. Brontë was faithful in visiting the sick and all those who sent for him, and diligent in attendance at the schools; and so was his daughter Charlotte too; but, cherishing and valuing privacy themselves, they were perhaps over-delicate in not intruding upon the privacy of others.

From their first going to Haworth, their walks were directed rather out towards the heathery moors, sloping upwards behind the parsonage,

than towards the long descending village street. A good old woman, who came to nurse Mrs. Brontë in the illness—an internal cancer—which grew and gathered upon her, not many months after her arrival at Haworth, tells me that at that time the six little creatures used to walk out, hand in hand, towards the glorious wild moors, which in after days they loved so passionately, the elder ones taking thoughtful care for the toddling wee things.

They were grave and silent beyond their years; subdued, probably, by the presence of serious illness in the house; for, at the time which my informant speaks of, Mrs. Brontë was confined to the bedroom from which she never came forth alive. "You would not have known there was a child in the house, they were such still, noiseless, good little creatures. Maria would shut herself up" (Maria, but seven!) "in the children's study with a newspaper, and be able to tell one everything when she came out; debates in Parliament, and I don't know what all. She was as good as a mother to her sisters and brother. But there never were such good children. I used to think them spiritless, they were so different to any children I had ever seen. They were good little creatures. Emily was the prettiest."

Mrs. Brontë was the same patient, cheerful person as we have seen her formerly; very ill,

suffering great pain, but seldom if ever complaining; at her better times begging her nurse to raise her in bed to let her see her clean the grate, "because she did it as it was done in Cornwall"; devotedly fond of her husband, who warmly repaid her affection, and suffered no one else to take the night-nursing; but, according to my informant, the mother was not very anxious to see much of her children, probably because the sight of them, knowing how soon they were to be left motherless, would have agitated her too much. So the little things clung quietly together, for their father was busy in his study and in his parish, or with their mother, and they took their meals alone; sat reading, or whispering low, in the "children's study," or wandered out on the hillside, hand in hand.

The ideas of Rousseau and Mr. Day on education had filtered down through many classes, and spread themselves widely out. I imagine Mr. Brontë must have formed some of his opinions on the management of children from these two theorists. His practice was not half so wild or extraordinary as that to which an aunt of mine was subjected by a disciple of Mr. Day's. She had been taken by this gentleman and his wife to live with them as their adopted child, perhaps about five-and-twenty years before the time of which I am writing. They were wealthy people and kind-hearted, but her food and clothing

were of the very simplest and rudest description, on Spartan principles. A healthy, merry child, she did not much care for dress or eating; but the treatment which she felt as a real cruelty was this. They had a carriage in which she and a favourite dog were taken an airing on alternate days; the creature whose turn it was to be left at home being tossed in a blanket—an operation which my aunt especially dreaded. Her affright at the tossing was probably the reason why it was persevered in. Dressed-up ghosts had been common, and she did not care for them, so the blanket exercise was to be the next mode of hardening her nerves. It is well known that Mr. Day broke off his intention of marrying Sabrina, the girl whom he had educated for this purpose, because, within a few weeks of the time fixed for the wedding, she was guilty of the frivolity, while on a visit from home, of wearing thin sleeves. Yet Mr. Day and my aunt's relations were benevolent people, only strongly imbued with the crotchet that by a system of training might be educed the hardihood and simplicity of the ideal savage, forgetting the terrible isolation of feelings and habits which their pupils would experience in the future life which they must pass among the corruptions and refinements of civilization.

Mr. Brontë wished to make his children hardy, and indifferent to the pleasures of eating and

dress. In the latter he succeeded as far as regarded his daughters.

His strong, passionate, Irish nature was, in general, compressed down with resolute stoicism; but it was there notwithstanding all his philosophic calm and dignity of demeanour, though he did not speak when he was annoyed or displeased. Mrs. Brontë, whose sweet nature thought invariably of the bright side, would say, "Ought I not to be thankful that he never gave me an angry word?"

Mr. Brontë was an active walker, stretching away over the moors for many miles, noting in his mind all natural signs of wind and weather, and keenly observing all the wild creatures that came and went in the loneliest sweeps of the hills. He has seen eagles stooping low in search of food for their young; no eagle is ever seen on those mountain slopes now.

He fearlessly took whatever side in local or national politics appeared to him right. In the days of the Luddites, he had been for the peremptory interference of the law, at a time when no magistrate could be found to act, and all the property of the West Riding was in terrible danger. He became unpopular then among the millworkers, and he esteemed his life unsafe if he took his long and lonely walks unarmed; so he began the habit which has continued to this day of invariably carrying a loaded pistol about

with him. It lay on his dressing-table with his watch; with his watch it was put on in the morning; with his watch it was taken off at night.

Many years later, during his residence at Haworth, there was a strike; the hands in the neighbourhood felt themselves aggrieved by the masters, and refused to work: Mr. Brontë thought that they had been unjustly and unfairly treated, and he assisted them by all the means in his power to "keep the wolf from their doors," and avoid the incubus of debt. Several of the more influential inhabitants of Haworth and the neighbourhood were mill-owners; they remonstrated pretty sharply with him, but he believed that his conduct was right, and persevered in it.

His opinions might be often both wild and erroneous, his principles of action eccentric and strange, his views of life partial, and almost misanthropical; but not one opinion that he held could be stirred or modified by any worldly motive: he acted up to his principles of action; and, if any touch of misanthropy mingled with his view of mankind in general, his conduct to the individuals who came in personal contact with him did not agree with such view. It is true that he had strong and vehement prejudices, and was obstinate in maintaining them, and that he was not dramatic enough in his perceptions to see how miserable others might be in a life

that to him was all-sufficient. But I do not pretend to be able to harmonize points of character, and account for them, and bring them all into one consistent and intelligible whole. The family with whom I have now to do shot their roots down deeper than I can penetrate. I cannot measure them, much less is it for me to judge them. I have named these instances of eccentricity in the father because I hold the knowledge of them to be necessary for a right understanding of the life of his daughter.

Mrs. Brontë died in September 1821, and the lives of those quiet children must have become quieter and lonelier still. Charlotte tried hard, in after years, to recall the remembrance of her mother, and could bring back two or three pictures of her. One was when, some time in the evening light, she had been playing with her little boy, Patrick Branwell, in the parlour of Haworth Parsonage. But the recollections of four or five years old are of a very fragmentary character.

Owing to some illness of the digestive organs, Mr. Brontë was obliged to be very careful about his diet; and, in order to avoid temptation, and possibly to have the quiet necessary for digestion, he had begun, before his wife's death, to take his dinner alone—a habit which he always retained. He did not require companionship, therefore he did not seek it, either in his walks, or in his daily life. The quiet regularity of his domestic hours

was only broken in upon by churchwardens, and visitors on parochial business; and sometimes by a neighbouring clergyman, who came down the hills, across the moors, to mount up again to Haworth Parsonage, and spend an evening there. But, owing to Mrs. Brontë's death so soon after her husband had removed into the district, and also to the distances, and the bleak country to be traversed, the wives of these clerical friends did not accompany their husbands; and the daughters grew up out of childhood into girlhood bereft, in a singular manner, of all such society as would have been natural to their age, sex, and station.

But the children did not want society. To small infantine gaieties they were unaccustomed. They were all in all to each other. I do not suppose that there ever was a family more tenderly bound to each other. Maria read the newspapers, and reported intelligence to her younger sisters which it is wonderful they could take an interest in. But I suspect that they had no "children's books," and that their eager minds "browsed undisturbed among the wholesome pasturage of English literature," as Charles Lamb expresses it. The servants of the household appear to have been much impressed with the little Brontës' extraordinary cleverness. In a letter which I had from him on this subject, their father writes:—"The servants often said that they had never seen such a clever little child" (as Charlotte), "and that they were

obliged to be on their guard as to what they said and did before her. Yet she and the servants always lived on good terms with each other."

These servants are yet alive; elderly women residing in Bradford. They retain a faithful and fond recollection of Charlotte, and speak of her unvarying kindness from the "time when she was ever such a little child!" when she would not rest till she got the old disused cradle sent from the parsonage to the house where the parents of one of them lived, to serve for a little infant sister. They tell of one long series of kind and thoughtful actions from his early period to the last weeks of Charlotte Brontë's life; and, though she had left her place many years ago, one of these former servants went over from Bradford to Haworth on purpose to see Mr. Brontë, and offer him her true sympathy, when his last child died. I may add a little anecdote as a testimony to the admirable character of the likeness of Miss Brontë prefixed to this volume. A gentleman who had kindly interested himself in the preparation of this memoir took the first volume, shortly after the publication, to the house of this old servant, in order to show her the portrait. The moment she caught a glimpse of the frontispiece, "There she is," in a minute she exclaimed. "Come, John, look!" (to her husband); and her daughter was equally struck by the resemblance. There might not be many to regard the Brontë's with affection,

but those who once loved them, loved them long and well.

I return to the father's letter. He says:—

"When mere children, as soon as they could read and write, Charlotte and her brothers and sisters used to invent and act little plays of their own, in which the Duke of Wellington, my daughter Charlotte's hero, was sure to come off conqueror; when a dispute would not unfrequently arise amongst them regarding the comparative methods of him, Buonaparte, Hannibal, and Cæsar. When the argument got warm, and rose to its height, as their mother was then dead, I had sometimes to come in as arbitrator, and settle the dispute according to the best of my judgment. Generally, in the management of these concerns, I frequently thought that I discovered signs of rising talent, which I had seldom or never before seen in any of their age. . . . A circumstance now occurs to my mind which I may as well mention. When my children were very young, when, as far as I can remember, the oldest was about ten years of age, and the youngest about four, thinking that they knew more than I had yet discovered, in order to make them speak with less timidity, I deemed that if they were put under cover I might gain my end; and happening to have a mask in the house, I told them all to stand and speak boldly from under cover of the mask.

"I began with the youngest (Anne, afterwards Acton Bell), and asked what a child like her most wanted; she answered, 'Age and experience.' I asked the next (Emily, afterwards Ellis Bell), what I had best do with her brother Branwell, who was sometimes a naughty boy; she answered, 'Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him.' I asked Branwell what was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellects of man and woman; he answered, 'By considering the difference between them as to their bodies.' I then asked Charlotte what was the best book in the world; she answered 'The Bible.' And what was the next best; she answered, 'The Book of Nature.' I then asked the next what was the best mode of education for a woman; she answered, 'That which would make her rule her house well.' Lastly, I asked the oldest what was the best mode of spending time; she answered, 'By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity.' I may not have given precisely their words, but I have nearly done so, as they made a deep and lasting impression on my memory. The substance, however, was exactly what I have stated."

The strange and quaint simplicity of the mode taken by the father to ascertain the hidden characters of his children, and the tone and character of these questions and answers, show the curious education which was made by the circumstances surrounding the Brontës. They knew

no other children. They knew no other modes of thought than what were suggested to them by the fragments of clerical conversation which they overheard in the parlour, or the subjects of village and local interest which they heard discussed in the kitchen. Each had their own strong characteristic flavour.

They took a vivid interest in the public characters, and the local and the foreign as well as home politics discussed in the newspapers. Long before Maria Brontë died, at the age of eleven, her father used to say he could converse with her on any of the leading topics of the day with as much freedom and pleasure as with any grown-up person.

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL.

JOAN OF ARC

JEANNE was the third daughter of a laboureur, Jacques *Darc,* and of Isabella *Romée.* Her two godmothers were called, the one, *Jeanne,* the other, *Sibylle.*

Their eldest son had been named *Jacques,* and another, *Pierre.* The pious parents gave one of their daughters the loftier name of Saint-*Jean.*

While the other children were taken by their father to work in the fields, or set to watch cattle, the mother kept Jeanne at home, sewing or spinning. She was taught neither reading nor writing; but she learned all her mother knew of sacred things. She imbibed her religion, not as a lesson or a ceremony, but in the popular and simple form of an evening fireside story, as a truth of a mother's telling. . . . What we imbibe thus with our blood and milk, is a living thing, is life itself. . . .

As regards Jeanne's piety, we have the affecting testimony of the friend of her infancy, of her bosom friend, Haumette, who was younger than she by three or four years. "Over and over again," she said, "I have been at her father's, and have slept with her, in all love (*de bonne amitie*).

. . . She was a very good girl, simple and gentle. She was fond of going to church, and to holy places. She spun, and attended to the house, like other girls. . . . She confessed frequently. She blushed when told that she was too devout, and went too often to church." A labourer, also summoned to give evidence, adds, that she nursed the sick, and was charitable to the poor. "I know it well," were his words; "I was then a child, and it was she who nursed me."

Her charity, her piety, were known to all. All saw that she was the best girl in the village. What they did not see and know was that in her, celestial aspirations ever absorbed worldly feelings, and suppressed their development. She had the divine gift to remain, soul and body, a child. She grew up strong and beautiful: but never knew the physical sufferings entailed on woman. They were spared her, that she might be the more devoted to religious thought and inspiration. Born under the very walls of the church, lulled in her cradle by the chimes of the bells, and nourished by legends, she was herself a legend, a quickly passing and pure legend from birth to death.

She was a living legend . . . but her vital spirits, exalted and concentrated, did not become the less creative. The young girl *created,* so to speak, unconsciously and *realized* her own ideas, endowing them with being, and imparting to

them, out of the strength of her original vitality, such splendid and all-powerful existence, that they threw into the shade the wretched realities of this world.

If poetry means *creation,* this undoubtedly is the highest poetry. Let us trace the steps by which she soared thus high from so lowly a starting-point.

Lowly, in truth, but already poetic. Her village was close to the vast forests of the Vosges. From the door of her father's house she could see the old oak wood, the wood haunted by fairies; whose favourite spot was a fountain near a large beech, called the fairies', or the *ladies'* tree. On this the children used to hang garlands, and would sing around it. These antique *ladies* and mistresses of the wood were, it was said, no longer permitted to assemble round the fountain, barred by their sins. However, the Church was always mistrustful of the old local divinities; and to insure their complete expulsion, the *curé* annually said a mass at the fountain.

Amidst these legends and popular dreams, Jeanne was born. But, along with these, the land presented a poetry of a far different character, savage, fierce, and, alas! but too real,—the poetry of war. War! All passions and emotions are included in this single word. It is not that every day brings with it assault and plunder, but it brings the fear of them—the tocsin, the awaking with a start, and, in the distant horizon, the

lurid light of conflagration, . . . a fearful but poetic state of things. The most prosaic of men, the lowland Scots, amidst the hazards of the border, have become poets: in this sinister desert, which even yet looks as if it were a region accursed, ballads, wild but long-lived flowers, have germed and flourished.

Jeanne had her share in these romantic adventures. She would see poor fugitives seek refuge in her village, would assist in sheltering them, give them up her bed, and sleep herself in the loft. Once, too, her parents had been obliged to turn fugitives; and then, when the flood of brigands had swept by, the family returned and found the village sacked, the house devastated, the church burnt.

Thus she knew what war was. Thoroughly did she understand this anti-Christian state, and unfeigned was her horror of this reign of the devil, in which every man died in mortal sin. She asked herself whether God would always allow this, whether he would not prescribe a term to such miseries, whether he would not send a liberator as he had so often done for Israel—a Gideon, a Judith? . . . She knew that woman had more than once saved God's own people, and that from the beginning it had been foretold that woman should bruise the serpent. No doubt she had seen over the portals of the churches St. Margaret, together with St. Michael, trampling

under foot the dragon. . . . If, as all the world said, the ruin of the kingdom was a woman's work, an unnatural mother's, its redemption might well be a virgin's: and this, moreover, had been foretold in a prophecy of Merlin's; a prophecy which, embellished and modified by the habits of each province, had become altogether Lorraine in Jeanne Darc's country. According to the prophecy current here, it was a Pucelle of the borders of *Lorraine* who was to save the realm; and the prophecy had probably assumed this form through the recent marriage of Rénè of Anjou with the heiress of the duchy of Lorraine, a marriage which, in truth, turned out very happily for the kingdom of France.

One summer's day, a fast-day, Jeanne, being at noontide in her father's garden, close to the church, saw a dazzling light on that side, and heard a voice say, "Jeanne, be a good and obedient child, go often to church." The poor girl was exceedingly alarmed.

Another time she again heard the voice and saw the radiance; and, in the midst of the effulgence, she beheld noble figures, one of which had wings, and seemed a wise *prud'homme*. "Jeanne," said this figure to her, "go to the succor of the king of France, and thou shalt restore his kingdom to him." She replied, all trembling, "Messire, I am only a poor girl; I know not how to ride or lead men-at-arms." The voice replied, "Go to

M. de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and he will conduct thee to the king. St. Catherine and St. Marguerite will be thy aids." She remained stupefied and in tears, as if her whole destiny had been revealed to her.

The *prud'homme* was no less than St. Michael, the severe archangel of judgments and of battles. He reappeared to her, inspired her with courage, and told her "the pity for the kingdom of France." Then appeared sainted women, all in white, with countless lights around, rich crowns on their heads, and their voices soft and moving unto tears: but Jeanne shed them much more copiously when saints and angels left her. "I longed," she said, "for the angels to take me away too."

If, in the midst of happiness like this, she wept, her tears were not causeless. Bright and glorious as these visions were, a change had from that moment come over her life. She who had hitherto heard but one voice, that of her mother, of which her own was the echo, now heard the powerful voice of angels—and what sought the heavenly voice! That she should quit that mother, quit her dear home. She, whom but a word put out of countenance, was required to mix with men, to address soldiers. She was obliged to quit, for the world and for war, her little garden under the shadow of the church, where she heard no ruder sounds than those of its bells, and where the birds ate out of her hand; for such was the

attractive sweetness of the young saint, that animals and the fowls of the air came to her, as formerly to the fathers of the desert, in all the trust of God's peace.

Jeanne has told us nothing of this first struggle that she had to undergo; but it is clear that it did take place, and that it was of long duration, since five years elapsed between her first vision and her final abandonment of her home.

The two authorities, the paternal and the celestial, enjoined her two opposite commands. The one ordered her to remain obscure, modest, and labouring; the other to set out and save the kingdom. The angel bade her arm herself. Her father, rough and honest peasant as he was, swore that rather than his daughter should go away with men-at-arms, he would drown her with his own hands. One or other, disobey she must. Beyond a doubt this was the greatest battle she was called upon to fight; those against the English were play in comparison.

In her family, she encountered not only resistance but temptation; for they attempted to marry her, in the hope of winning her back to more rational notions, as they considered. A young villager pretended that in her childhood she had promised to marry him; and on her denying this, he cited her before the ecclesiastical Judge of Toul. It was imagined that rather than undertake the effort of speaking in her own de-

fence, she would submit to marriage. To the great astonishment of all who knew her, she went to Toul, appeared in court, and spoke—she who had been noted for her modest silence.

In order to escape from the authority of her family, it behooved her to find in the bosom of that family some one who would believe in her: this was the most difficult part of all. In default of her father, she made her uncle a convertite to the truth of her mission. He took her home with him, as if to attend her aunt who was lying-in. She persuaded him to appeal on her behalf to the sire de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs. The soldier gave a cool reception to the peasant, and told him that the best thing to be done was "to give her a good whipping," and take her back to her father. She was not discouraged; she would go to him, and forced her uncle to accompany her. This was the decisive moment; she quitted forever her village and family, and embraced her friends, above all, her good little friend, Mengette, whom she recommended to God's keeping; as to her elder friend and companion, Haumette, her whom she loved most of all, she preferred quitting without leave-taking.

At length she reached this city of Vaucouleurs, attired in her coarse red peasant's dress, and took up her lodging with her uncle at the house of a wheelwright, whose wife conceived a friendship for her. She got herself taken to Baudricourt, and

said to him in a firm tone, "That she came to him from her Lord, to the end that he might send the Dauphin word to keep firm, and to fix no day of battle with the enemy, for his Lord would send him succor in Mid-Lent. . . . The realm was not the dauphin's but her Lord's; nevertheless, her Lord willed the Dauphin to be king, and to hold the realm in trust." She added, that despite the Dauphin's enemies, he would be king, and that she would take him to be crowned.

The captain was much astonished: he suspected that the devil must have a hand in the matter. Thereupon, he consulted the *curé,* who, apparently, partook his doubts. She had not spoken of her visions to any priest or churchman. So the *curé* accompanied the captain to the wheelwright's house, showed his stole, and adjured Jeanne to depart if sent by the evil spirit.

But the people had no doubts; they were struck with admiration. From all sides, crowds flocked to see her. A gentleman, to try her, said to her, "Well, sweetheart; after all, the king will be driven out of the kingdom, and we must turn English." She complained to him of Baudricourt's refusal to take her to the dauphin; "And yet," she said, "before Mid-Lent, I must be with the king, even were I to wear out my legs to the knees; for no one in the world, nor kings, nor dukes, nor daughter of the king of Scotland, can recover the kingdom of France, and he has no

other who can succor him save myself, albeit I would prefer staying and spinning with my poor mother, but this is no work of my own; I must go and do it, for it is my Lord's will."—"And who is your lord?"—"God!" . . . The gentleman was touched. He pledged her "his faith, his hand placed in hers, that, with God's guiding, he would conduct her to the king." A young man, of gentle birth, felt himself touched likewise; and declared that he would follow this holy maid.

It appears that Baudricourt sent to ask the king's pleasure; and that in the interim he took Jeanne to see the Duke of Lorraine, who was ill, and desired to consult her. All that the duke got from her was advice to appease God by reconciling himself with his wife. Nevertheless, he gave her encouragement.

On returning to Vaucouleurs she found there a messenger from the king, who authorized her to repair to court. The reverse of the Battle of Herrings had determined his counsellors to try any and every means. Jeanne had proclaimed the battle and its result on the very day it was fought; and the people of Vaucouleurs, no longer doubting her mission, subscribed to equip her and buy her a horse. Baudricourt only gave her a sword.

At this moment an obstacle arose. Her parents, informed of her approaching departure, nearly lost their senses, and made the strongest efforts

to retain her, commanding, threatening. She withstood this last trial; and got a letter written to them, beseeching them to forgive her.

The journey she was about to undertake was a rough and most dangerous one. The whole country was overrun by the men-at-arms of both parties. There was neither road nor bridge, and the rivers were swollen: it was the month of February, 1429.

To travel at such a time with five or six men-at-arms was enough to alarm a young girl. An English woman, or a German, would never have risked such a step; the indelicacy of the proceeding would have horrified her. Jeanne was nothing moved by it; she was too pure to entertain any fears of the kind. She wore a man's dress, a dress she wore to the last: this close and closely fastened dress was her best safe-guard. Yet was she young and beautiful. But there was around her, even to those who were most with her, a barrier raised by religion and fear. The youngest of the gentlemen who formed her escort deposes that though sleeping near her, the shadow of an impure thought never crossed his mind.

She traversed with heroic serenity these districts, either desert, or infested with soldiers. Her companions regretted having set out with her, some of them thinking that she might be perhaps a witch; and they felt a strong desire to abandon her. For herself she was so tranquil, that she

would stop at every town to hear mass. "Fear nothing," she said, "God guides me my way; 'tis for this I was born." And again, "My brothers in paradise tell me what I am to do."

Charles VII.th's [the Dauphin's] court was far from being unanimous in favour of the Pucelle. This inspired maid, coming from Lorraine, and encouraged by the duke of Lorraine, could not fail to strengthen the queen's and her mother's party, the party of Lorraine and of Anjou, with the king. An ambuscade was laid for the Pucelle some distance from Chinon, and it was a miracle she escaped.

So strong was the opposition to her, that when she arrived, the question of her being admitted to the king's presence was debated for two days in the council. Her enemies hoped to adjourn the matter indefinitely, by proposing that an inquiry should be instituted concerning her in her native place. Fortunately [there were not only enemies in this council, but] she had friends as well [including] the two queens, we may be assured, and, especially, the Duke of Alençon, who, having recently left English keeping, was impatient to carry the war into the north in order to recover his duchy. The men of Orleans, to whom Dunois had been promising this heavenly aid ever since the 12th of February, sent to the king and claimed the Pucelle.

At last the king received her, and surrounded

by all the splendour of his court, in the hope, apparently, of disconcerting her. It was evening; the light of fifty torches illumed the hall, and a brilliant array of nobles and above three hundred knights were assembled round the monarch. Every one was curious to see the sorceress, or, as it might be, the inspired maid.

The sorceress was eighteen years of age; she was a beautiful and most desirable girl, of good height, and with a sweet and heart-touching voice.

She entered the splendid circle with all humility "like a poor little shepherdess," distinguished at the first glance the king, who had purposely kept himself amidst the crowd of courtiers, and although at first he maintained that he was not the king, she fell down and embraced his knees. But as he had not been crowned, she only styled him dauphin:—"Gentle dauphin," she addressed him, "my name is Jehanne la Pucelle. The King of heaven sends you word by me that you shall be consecrated and crowned in the city of Reims, and shall be lieutenant of the King of heaven, who is king of France." The king then took her aside, and, after a moment's consideration, both changed countenance. She told him, as she subsequently acknowledged to her confessors: —"I am commissioned by my Lord to tell you that you are the *true heir* to the French throne, and the *king's son.*"

A circumstance which awoke still greater astonishment and a sort of fear is, that the first prediction which fell from her lips was accomplished the instant it was made. A soldier was struck by her beauty, and who expressed his desires aloud with the coarseness of the camp, and swearing by his God: "Alas!" she exclaimed, "thou deniest him, and art so near thy death!" A moment after, he fell into the river and was drowned.

Her enemies started the objection, that if she knew the future it must be through the devil. Four or five bishops were got together to examine her; but through fear, no doubt, of compromising themselves with either of the parties which divided the court, they referred the examination to the University of Poitiers, in which great city were both university, parliament, and a number of able men.

The archbishop of Reims, chancellor of France, president of the royal council, issued his mandate to the doctors, and to the professors of theology—the one priests, the other monks, and charged them to examine the Pucelle.

When the doctors had been introduced, and placed in a hall, the young maid seated herself at the end of the bench, and replied to their questionings. She related with a simplicity that rose to grandeur the apparitions of angels with which she had been visited, and their words. A single objection was raised by a Dominican, but it was

a serious one—"Jehanne, thou sayest that God wishes to deliver the people of France; if such be his will, he has no need of men-at-arms." She was not disconcerted:—"Ah! my God," was her reply, "the men-at-arms will fight, and God will give the victory."

Another was more difficult to be satisfied—a Limousin, brother Seguin, professor of theology at the University of Poitiers, a "very sour man," says the chronicle. He asked her in his Limousin French, what tongue that pretended celestial voice spoke? Jehanne answered, a little too hastily, "A better than yours."—"Does thou believe in God?" said the doctor, in a rage: "now, God wills us not to have faith in thy words, except thou showest a sign." She replied, "I have not come to Poitiers to show signs or work miracles; my sign will be the raising of the siege of Orleans. Give me men-at-arms, few or many, and I will go."

JULES MICHELET.

DANTE

MANY volumes have been written by way of commentary on Dante and his Book; yet, on the whole, with no great result. His biography is, as it were, irrecoverably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering, sorrow-stricken man, not much note was taken of him while he lived; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes. It is five centuries since he ceased writing and living here. After all commentaries, the Book itself is mainly what we know of him. The Book,—and one might add that Portrait commonly attributed to Giotto, which, looking on it, you cannot help inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it is a most touching face; perhaps, all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless;—significant of the whole history of Dante! I think it is the mournfulest face that ever was painted from reality; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle

affection as of a child; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud, hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent, scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean, insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in protest, and life-long, unsurrendering battle, against the world. Affection all converted into indignation; an implacable indignation; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god! The eye too, it looks out as in a kind of *surprise,* a kind of inquiry. Why the world was of such a sort? This is Dante: so he looks, this "voice of ten silent centuries," and sings us "his mystic unfathomable song."

The little that we know of Dante's life corresponds well enough with his Portrait and this Book. He was born at Florence, in the upper class of society, in the year 1265. His education was the best then going; much school-divinity, Aristotelian logic, some Latin classics,—no inconsiderable insight into certain provinces of things: and Dante, with his earnest, intelligent nature, we need not doubt, learned better than most all that was learnable. He has a clear, culti-

vated understanding, and of great subtlety; this best fruit of education he had contrived to realize from these scholastics. He knows accurately and well what lies close to him; but in such a time, without printed books or free intercourse, he could not know well what was distant: the small, clear light, most luminous for what is near, breaks itself into singular *chiaroscuro* striking on what is far off. This was Dante's learning from the schools. In life, he had gone through the usual destinies;—been twice out campaigning as a soldier for the Florentine state; been on embassy; had in his thirty-fifth year, by natural gradation of talent and service, become one of the chief magistrates of Florence. He had met in boyhood a certain Beatrice Portinari, a beautiful little girl of his own age and rank, and grown up thenceforth in partial sight of her, in some distant intercourse with her. All readers know his graceful affecting account of this; and then of their being parted; of her being wedded to another, and of her death soon after. She makes a great figure in Dante's Poems; seems to have made a great figure in his life. Of all beings it might seem as if she, held apart from him, far apart at last in the dim Eternity, were the only one he had ever with his whole strength of affection loved. She died: Dante himself was wedded; but it seems not happily, far from happily. I fancy, the rigorous, earnest man, with his

keen excitabilities, was not altogether easy to make happy.

We will not complain of Dante's miseries: had all gone right with him as he wished it, he might have been Prior, Podestà, or whatsoever they call it, of Florence, well accepted among neighbours, and the world had wanted one of the most notable words ever spoken or sung. Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor; and the ten dumb centuries continued voiceless, and the ten other listening centuries (for there will be ten of them and more) had no *Divina Commedia* to hear! We will complain of nothing. A nobler destiny was appointed for this Dante; and he, struggling like a man led towards death and crucifixion, could not help fulfilling it. Give *him* the choice of his happiness! He knew not, more than we do, what was really happy, what was really miserable.

In Dante's Priorship, the Guelph-Ghibbeline, Bianchi-Neri, or some other confused disturbances, rose to such a height, that Dante, whose party had seemed the stronger, was with his friends cast unexpectedly forth into banishment; doomed thenceforth to a life of woe and wandering. His property was all confiscated, and more; he had the fiercest feeling that it was entirely unjust, nefarious in the sight of God and man. He tried what was in him to get reinstated; tried even by warlike surprisal, with arms in his hand;

but it would not do; bad only had become worse. There is a record, I believe, still extant in the Florence Archives, dooming this Dante, wheresoever caught, to be burnt alive. Burnt alive; so it stands, they say: a very curious civic document. Another curious document, some considerable number of years later, is a Letter of Dante's to the Florentine Magistrates, written in answer to a milder proposal of theirs, that he should return on condition of apologizing and paying a fine. He answers, with fixed, stern pride: "If I cannot return without calling myself guilty, I will never return, *nunquam revertar*."

For Dante there was now no home in this world. He wandered from patron to patron, from place to place; proving, in his own bitter words, "How hard is the path, *Come è duro calle*." The wretched are not cheerful company. Dante, poor and banished, with his proud, earnest nature, with his moody humours, was not a man to conciliate men. Petrarch reports of him, that being at Can della Scala's court, and blamed one day for his gloom and taciturnity, he answered in no courtier-like way. Della Scala stood among his courtiers, with mimes and buffons (*nebulones ac histriones*) making him heartily merry; when, turning to Dante, he said: "Is it not strange, now, that this poor fool should make himself so entertaining; while you, a wise man, sit there day after day, and have nothing

to amuse us with at all?" Dante answered bitterly: "No, not strange; your Highness is to recollect the proverb, *Like to Like";*—given the amuser, the amusee must also be given! Such a man, with his proud, silent ways, with his sarcasms and sorrows, was not made to succeed at court. By degrees, it came to be evident to him that he had no longer any resting-place, or hope of benefit in this earth. The earthly world had cast him forth, to wander; no living heart to love him now; for his sore miseries there was no solace here.

The deeper naturally would the Eternal World impress itself on him; that awful reality over which after all, this Time-world, with its Florences and banishments, only flutters as an unreal shadow. Florence thou shalt never see: but Hell and Purgatory and Heaven thou shalt surely see! What is Florence, Can della Scala, and the World and Life altogether? ETERNITY: thither, of a truth, not elsewhither, art thou and all things bound! The great soul of Dante, homeless on earth, made its home more and more in that other awful world. Naturally his thoughts brooded on that, as on the one fact important for him. Bodied or bodiless, it is the one fact important for all men: but to Dante, in that age, it was bodied in fixed certainty of scientific shape; he no more doubted of that *Malebolge* Pool, that it all lay there with its gloomy circles with its

alti guai, and that he himself should see it, than we doubt that we should see Constantinople if we went thither. Dante's heart, long filled with this, brooding over it in speechless thought and awe, bursts forth at length into "mystic, unfathomable song;" and this his *Divine Comedy,* the most remarkable of all modern Books, is the result. It must have been a great solacement to Dante, and was, as we can see, a proud thought for him at times, that he, here in exile, could do this work; that no Florence, nor no man or men, could hinder him from doing it, or even much help him in doing it. He knew too, partly, that it was great; the greatest a man could do. "If thou follow thy star, *Se tu segui tua stella,*"—so could the Hero, in his forsakenness, in his extreme need, still say to himself: "Follow thou thy star, thou shalt not fail of a glorious haven!" The labour of writing, we find, and indeed could know otherwise, was great and painful for him: he says, This Book "which has made me lean for many years." Ah yes, it was won, all of it, with pain and sore toil,—not in sport, but in grim earnest. His book, as indeed most good Books are, has been written, in many senses, with his heart's blood. It is his whole history this Book. He died after finishing it; not yet very old, at the age of fifty-six; broken-hearted rather, as is said. He lies buried in his death-city Ravenna: *Hic claudor Dantes patriis extorris ab orris.* The Flor-

entines begged back his body, in a century after; the Ravenna people would not give it. "Here am I Dante laid, shut out from my native shores."

I said, Dante's Poem was a Song: it is Tieck who calls it "a mystic, unfathomable Song"; and such is literally the character of it. Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere, that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here as everywhere. Song: we said before, it was the Heroic of Speech! All *old* Poems, Homer's and the rest, are authentically Songs. I would say, in strictness, that all right Poems are; that whatsoever is not *sung* is properly no Poem, but a piece of Prose cramped into jingling lines,—to the great injury of the grammar, to the great grief of the reader, for most part! What we want to get at is the *thought* the man had, if he had any: why should he twist it into jingle, if he could speak it out plainly? It is only when the heart of him is rapt into true passion of melody, and the very tones of him, according to Coleridge's remark, become musical by the greatness, depth, and music of his thoughts, that we can give him right to rhyme and sing; that we call him a Poet, and listen to him as the Heroic of Speakers,—whose speech *is* song. Pretenders to this are many; and to an earnest reader, I doubt,

it is for most part a very melancholy, not to say an insupportable business, that of reading rhyme! Rhyme that had no inward necessity to be rhymed;—it ought to have told us plainly, without any jingle, what it was aiming at. I would advise all men who *can* speak their thought, not to sing it; to understand that, in a serious time, among serious men, there is no vocation in them for singing it. Precisely as we love the true song, and are charmed by it as by something divine, so shall we hate the false song, and account it a mere wooden noise, a thing hollow, superfluous, altogether an insincere and offensive thing.

I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his *Divine Comedy* that it is, in all senses, genuinely a Song. In the very sound of it there is a *canto fermo;* it proceeds as by a chant. The language, his simple *terza rima,* doubtless helped him in this. One reads along naturally with a sort of *lilt.* But I add, that it could not be otherwise; for the essence and material of the work are themselves rhythmic. Its depth, and rapt passion and sincerity, makes it musical;—go *deep* enough, there is music everywhere. A true inward symmetry, what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns in it, proportionates it all: architectural; which also partakes of the character of music. The three kingdoms, *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso,* look out on one another like compartments of a great edifice; a great supernatural world-

cathedral, piled up there, stern, solemn, awful; Dante's World of Souls! It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all Poems; sincerity, here too, we find to be the measure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts; and it goes deep, and through long generations, into ours. The people of Verona, when they saw him on the streets, used to say: *"Eccovi l'uomo ch' è stato all' Inferno,* See, there is the man that was in Hell!" Ah, yes, he had been in Hell!—in Hell enough, in long, severe sorrow and struggle; as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. Commedias that come out *divine* are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind; true *effort,* in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought. In all ways we are "to become perfect through *suffering.*"—But, as I say, no work known to me is so elaborated as this of Dante's. It has all been as if molten, in the hottest furnace of his soul. It had made him "lean" for many years. Not the general whole only; every compartment of it is worked out, with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visuality. Each answers to the other; each fits in its place, like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the Middle Ages, rendered for ever rhythmically visible there. . . .

THOMAS CARLYLE.